# CITY HILIGHTS

The Truth Speaks

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# Centre does a volte-face, rolls back 'Sanchar Saathi'

## The DoT states it is removing the order mandating installation of the Sanchar Saathi app, following a 10-fold jump in voluntary app downlaods in just one day

**NEW DELHI**

The Centre, after backlash, removed on Wednesday the mandatory pre-installation of Sanchar Saathi cybersecurity app for mobile manufacturers.

The Department of Telecom (DoT) stated that it was rolling back the requirement after a sharp rise in voluntary downloads. "Just in last one day, 6 lakh citizens have registered for downloading the app, which is a 10x increase in its uptake. Given Sanchar Saathi's increasing acceptance, the government has decided not to make the pre-installation mandatory for mobile manufacturers," it stated.

The mandate to pre-install "was meant to accelerate this process", it added.

"The government, with an intent to provide access to cybersecurity to all citizens, mandated pre-installation of Sanchar Saathi app on all smartphones.

The app is secure and meant to help citizens from bad actors in the cyber world. There is no other function other than protecting users... and they can remove the app," it stated.

The mandate, issued on November 28, required companies to ship all new devices, and update older ones, with the app.

The directive by the government, which projected the app as a crucial cybersecurity tool designed to help citizens track lost phones and prevent telecom fraud, triggered debate over privacy issues and opposition parties raised concerns about potential surveillance, data privacy violations, and the constitutional validity of such a mandate.

The order triggered widespread criticism, with opposition parties claiming the directive enabled state surveillance and raised concerns that the app could listen to calls or monitor messages.

**Just like any other app on your phone, Sanchar Saathi is an option. Citizens may use it if they want, or uninstall it anytime. In a democracy, the final authority is with the citizens. We are always ready to amend rules based on citizens' suggestions and feedback.**

—Jyotiraditya Scindia, Union Minister for Communications

### 'Sanchar Saathi an option like any other app'

During a discussion in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday, Union Minister for Communications and Development of the North Eastern Region, Jyotiraditya Scindia informed the Parliament that the government is willing to amend the rules of the platform based on public suggestions and feedback. Scindia, stressing that "Snooping is neither possible through the Sanchar Saathi app, nor will it ever be", told Parliament that the app does not function without user registration, and every citizen has the full right to choose whether to use it or delete it anytime.

**BEHIND THE ROW**

**Initial mandate:** On November 28, 2025, the DoT issued a directive requiring all new mobile handsets manufactured or imported into India to have the app pre-installed.

**Privacy concerns:** Opposition parties and privacy advocates criticized the move, calling the app a potential "snooping app" and a violation of the right to privacy.

# Let him go, I won't go without invite: Siddu

**BENGALURU**

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Wednesday said he would not travel to New Delhi unless he is formally invited.

As his deputy D K Shivakumar flies to Delhi amid the ongoing power-tussle in Karnataka, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Wednesday said he would not travel to New Delhi unless he is formally invited

"Let him go. I will go only if I receive a call. I have not received a call so far," the CM told reporters here.

Speculation in political circles has intensified once again after DK Shivakumar flew to Delhi on Wednesday afternoon. Although Shivakumar said he was going to Delhi for a private marriage function, there is a high chance he will meet top party leaders to discuss the ongoing political crisis in his home state.

### Going for a marriage function: DKS

Speaking to reporters here, Shivakumar said he will be back in Bengaluru for a cabinet meeting after attending brief meetings and a marriage function. "I am going to Delhi for a private marriage function. On December 14, we will be going to Ramlila Maidan, where a very big programme has been organised. From Karnataka, we need at least 300 people to visit Delhi. I have asked all the district ministers and MLAs to monitor that and take all the party cadres to the vote chori programme. I am going there to see the arrangements, and I will come back tomorrow morning for a cabinet meeting. I will just attend the marriage and 2-3 small meetings, and I will come back", the Deputy CM said.

### Issue could take 30 months or three years: Jarkiholi

PWD Minister Satish Jarkiholi fuelled further speculation over the power tussle, saying the issue could take "30 months or three years". "I said it could be 30 months or it could be three years," he told reporters in Mangaluru. This comes as KC Venugopal witnessed a display of internal party dynamics upon his arrival at Mangaluru airport.

### It's all over now: Parameshwara

Meanwhile, Home Minister G Parameshwara said he does not wish to comment further on recent political differences, saying any minor issues have been resolved. "I dont want to comment unnecessarily. It's all over now. Whatever little difference was there, if it was there, has been resolved," he told reporters.

## 100-day 'Bal Vivah Mukt Bharat' campaign from today

**NEW DELHI**

The 100-Day Intensive Awareness Campaign for a Child Marriage-Free Bharat will be formally launched on Thursday (December 4) at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, to mark one year of the 'Bal Vivah Mukt Bharat' campaign.

The Ministry of Women and Child Development had launched the 'Bal Vivah Mukt Bharat' campaign on November 27, 2024, and it completed one year on November 27, 2025.

As per the release, Thursday's launch event will be graced by the Union Minister of Women and Child Development, Annpurna Devi, in the presence of the Minister of State, Savitri Thakur.

## 200 IndiGo flights cancelled, Ops hit

**NEW DELHI**

India's largest airline IndiGo is facing one of its most severe operational breakdowns in recent years. It has been forced to delay and cancel hundreds of flights across the country as it struggles to cope with new pilot rest and duty-hour norms, even a month after their implementation.

As per IndiGo website, it operates over 2,200 daily flights. While the government data from Tuesday shows the airline's on-time performance plunging to 35%, a dramatic fall for a carrier long associated with punctuality. The data implies over 1,400 flights were delayed on Tuesday. The turbulence continued on Wednesday when airports in Hyderabad, Delhi, Bengaluru and Mumbai collectively reported close to 200 IndiGo flight cancellations by afternoon, triggering chaos among passengers.

Meanwhile, the Mumbai airport issued a statement, "Some IndiGo flights operating from Mumbai Airport may experience delays or cancellations due to airline-related operational issues."

**What caused chaos?**
The airline's unpreparedness, stemming from poor planning and insufficient hiring, has led to disruptions during peak travel season, frustrating passengers and exposing operational challenges.

**'Crew shortage after new duty norms'**
As per reports, a significant factor behind the chaos is a sharp shortage of crew, particularly pilots, following the introduction of revised Flight Duty Time Limitation (FDTL) norms last month. The new rules mandate more rest hours and humane rosters, but IndiGo has been struggling to realign its massive network accordingly. According to sources, many flights had to be grounded because no cabin crew was available, while others faced delays stretching up to eight hours. With IndiGo commanding more than 60% of the domestic airline market, the ripple effect from its disrupted schedule has been felt severely.

## 12 Maoists killed, 3 DRG Jawans martyred

**BHOPAL**

One of the biggest anti-Maoist offensives in recent months is unfolding in the dense forests of the West Bastar along the Bijapur-Dantewada inter-district border. Security forces have recovered the bodies of 12 Maoist cadres so far, as the joint operation launched early Wednesday continues deep inside Maoist strongholds.

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai said, "Today, our brave security forces neutralised 12 Maoists in the ongoing anti-Naxal operation in Bijapur district. Continuous search and combing operations are underway in the area. In this encounter, DRG Bijapur's Head Constable Monu Waddi, Constable Dukaru Gonde, and Constable Ramesh Sodi made the supreme sacrifice. I pay my humble tribute to these brave soldiers."

Bijapur SP Dr Jitendra Yadav confirmed that teams from DRG Bijapur-Dantewada, STF, CRPF, and CoBRA were conducting a coordinated search when they came under heavy Naxal fire around 9 am. Intermittent gunfire persisted for hours, with security forces executing an aggressive counter-offensive.

Bastar Range IG Sundarraj P stated that weapons recovered from the encounter site include SLR rifles, INSAS rifles, and .303 rifles, along with other arms and ammunition.

## Woman kills 4 kids out of 'jealousy'

Haryana: The probe into the killings began after the recent death of six-year-old Vidhi, who was found dead on Monday with her head submerged in a water tub and her feet on the ground in the storeroom of her relative's house.

The accused, Poonam, had earlier killed three children, including her own son in 2023 in the same way as her niece by drowning, the police said. She allegedly murdered the girls "out of jealousy" as she thought the children were prettier than her. Further, Poonam killed her son to allegedly avoid suspicion of killing the girls. In the recent incident, Poonam's niece, six-year-old Vidhi, who lived in Sonipat, had come to Naultha village with her grandparents, parents and 10-month old brother to attend a wedding.The incident occurred when the wedding procession arrived in Naultha. Soon, Vidhi's father received a phone call informing him that she was missing, and the family began searching for her.

**QUICK READ**

### MP cough syrup deaths: ED attaches assets of Coldrif promoter in Chennai

**NEW DELHI**

Two flats in Tamil Nadu's Chennai belonging to the promoter of Sresan Pharmaceuticals, the manufacturer of Coldrif cough syrup linked to the death of 20 children in Madhya Pradesh, have been attached under the anti-money laundering law, the Enforcement Directorate said on Wednesday. The flats worth Rs 2.04 crore at Kodambakkam are owned by G Ranganathan and his family members, it stated. Ranganathan was arrested by Madhya Pradesh Police in October.

### Cong MLA Pappi duped man of Rs 8 cr: Probe

**BENGALURU**

Congress MLA Veerendra Pappi, who has been accused of running a betting racket involving crores, has been arrested by the Enforcement Directorate and has already spent three months in the central agency's custody. However, the ED has now launched another probe against Veerendra Pappi.

K C Veerendra had allegedly cheated an out-of-state person of Rs 8 crore and the ED hase recorded the statement from the individual. After recording his statement, the individual filed a complaint with the central agency.

**CASTE OPPRESSION, REALLY?**

# 'Reserved-quota students dominate higher edu enrollment'

**NEW DELHI**

A new study of India's higher education landscape reveals a dramatic shift in caste-wise enrolment patterns over the past decade, with Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and Other Backward Classes (OBC) now forming the overwhelming majority of students across the country's higher educational institutes.

As per a statement, the findings, based on 13 years of All-India Survey of Higher Education (AISHE) data, challenge widely circulated claims about "upper-caste dominance" in India's education sector.

According to the study, conducted by the Centre for Development Policy and Management (CDPM) at IIM Udaipur, researchers analysed census-level AISHE reports from 2010–11 to 2022–23, covering 60,380 institutions and 43.8 million students.

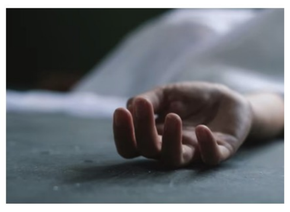
The research team — Prof Venkatramanan Krishnamurthy, faculty in Quantitative Methods and Information Systems at IIM Udaipur; Thiyagarajan Jayaraman, IT specialist and Data Research Analyst; and Prof Dina Banerjee, faculty in Organizational Behaviour and Human Resource Management at IIM Udaipur — describes the dataset as one of the most comprehensive examinations of caste representation in Indian higher education sector to date.

It has found that students from SC/ST and OBC categories outnumber the enrollment of general category students into higher education."This report shatters several widespread misconceptions about the social composition of students in Indian higher education," says Prof Venkatramanan.

**STUDY FINDINGS**

- The combined share of SC/ST/OBC students in higher education rose from 43.1% in 2010-11 to 60.8% in 2022-23.
- In 2023 alone, SC/ST/OBC enrolment exceeded that of the general category by 9.5 million students
- Meanwhile, the general category share fell from 57% in 2011 to about 39% in 2023, even after including Economically Weaker Section (EWS) students.

## QUICK READ



### Elderly man dies after consuming brake fluid

**Udupi**

A heartbreaking incident occurred in Hebri, where 78-year-old Thammu Poojary lost his life after accidentally drinking brake fluid, mistaking it for liquor. The incident happened at his home in Balladi Ishwar Nagar, Mudradi village. Poojary, a local resident, was rushed to Wenlock District Hospital in Mangaluru after falling seriously ill. Despite medical efforts, he succumbed to the toxic substance on December 2. The Hebri Police Station has registered a case, and investigations are underway. This tragic event highlights the dangers of mistaken identity and the importance of handling household chemicals with care. Brake fluid, in particular, is highly toxic and can be fatal if ingested.

### Owl startles driver, auto hits electric pole

**Kasaragod**

In a bizarre incident, an autorickshaw driver, Yusuf (50), was injured when his vehicle crashed into an electric pole after an owl suddenly landed on his shoulder near Bendichal. The incident occurred while Yusuf was returning to Kasargod after dropping a passenger. Startled by the unexpected visitor, Yusuf lost control of the auto rickshaw, causing it to veer off the road and hit an electric pole. The front portion of the vehicle was badly damaged. Yusuf has been admitted to hospital for treatment, where he is receiving medical attention for his injuries. Local residents are shocked by the unusual incident, and authorities are investigating the circumstances surrounding the crash.

### Pawan Kalyan to attend Gita Festival in Udupi

**Udupi**

Telugu actor and Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan is set to attend the concluding ceremony of the Geeta Festival at Sri Krishna Math in Udupi on December 7. The event is part of the Chaturth Vishva Geeta Parayaya, organized by the Parayaya Puttige Math. Kalyan, who is also the Minister for Environment, Forests, Science, and Technology, will arrive in Udupi at 4:00 pm on December 7 as the chief guest. The Geeta Festival, which began on November 8, has witnessed various programs, including the Lakshakant Gita Parayana, which earned a world record and was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.The event is expected to be a grand affair, with devotees and dignitaries from across the region attending.

# Neglected potholes near Silas School pose safety risks

The danger escalates at night, when the manhole is nearly invisible, and the uneven, eroded tar surface continues to cause mishaps

**UDUPI**

The Kalsanka-Ambagilu Road near Silas International School has become a hazardous stretch due to neglected potholes and a worn-out manhole, posing serious safety risks to commuters. The road has completely worn away around the manhole, and large potholes have formed due to constant vehicular movement.

Hundreds of students use this road daily to reach Silas International School, and the heavy traffic forces motorists to swerve dangerously close to the edges to avoid the manhole. A barricade has been placed to block vehicles from the damaged section, but it has created additional hazards at night, as speeding vehicles risk crashing into it.

The danger escalates at night, when the manhole is nearly invisible, and the uneven, eroded tar surface continues to cause mishaps. Gravel scattered from the potholes has made the surface particularly risky for two-wheelers, increasing the chances of skidding and accidents.

Local residents are up in arms against the authorities, alleging that roads are repaired only when VIP movement is expected. "Development activity in Udupi district is very low, as we can see many roads in a devastated state," said Prabhakar Poojary, a local resident.

The Paryaya festival scheduled in January is expected to draw thousands of devotees from Kundapura and Brahmavar, making this stretch a major black spot and raising serious public safety concerns.

A vehicle user appealed to the authorities to immediately repair the road and ensure the safety of the public. Despite repeated complaints, the Udupi City Municipality and district administration have failed to implement permanent corrective measures, forcing residents to navigate unsafe roads and placing their lives at constant risk.

Karnataka Rakshana Vedike has threatened to hold a protest at the City Municipality if the authorities do not provide a permanent solution.

# Delays in Brahmavar service road project sparks public outrage

**UDUPI**

**According to sources, the Highways Department has attributed the delay to the non-cooperation of the Mesco (Mysore Electricity Supply Company) department in relocating the electricity poles**

The ongoing construction of the service road along National Highway 66 in Brahmavar has been stalled due to the relocation of electricity poles, causing widespread frustration among locals. The project, which began in May, was halted during the monsoon season and has yet to resume, sparking concerns about the safety of commuters.

The delay has led to increased traffic congestion and accidents in the area, prompting locals to demand immediate action from the authorities. The service road project was initiated following a prolonged protest by residents, who had been demanding improved infrastructure to reduce the rising number of accidents and fatalities on the highway.

According to sources, the Highways Department has attributed the delay to the non-cooperation of the Mesco (Mysore Electricity Supply Company) department in relocating the electricity poles. However, Mesco officials claim that they have already submitted an estimate for the relocation work and are awaiting payment from the Highways Department.

"There is no point in blaming each other. The priority should be to complete the project as soon as possible and ensure the safety of commuters," said Alvin Andraje, a local activist.

The Project Manager of the Highways Department, Chandrashekar, has assured that the payment will be made to Mesco within a week, and the project will be resumed soon. The authorities have also announced plans to prepare a comprehensive report on the remaining service road and overbridge projects along the highway.

The delay in the project has raised concerns about the government's commitment to improving infrastructure and ensuring public safety. Locals are urging the authorities to expedite the project and complete it at the earliest to prevent further accidents and fatalities.

## House thief arrested; gold worth Rs 65.79 lakh recovered

**UDUPI**

The Udupi city police have arrested a habitual house burglar, Sukesh Naik (37), and recovered stolen gold ornaments worth Rs 65,79,720. Naik, a resident of Kukkikatte in Kukkehalli village, was arrested near Hiren Bar in Kinnimulky.

The arrest was made following a complaint filed by Sheila Wilhelm Meena (53), who reported missing gold ornaments weighing 548.31 grams and her mobile phone from her home in Volakadu on November 30. A special investigation team, led by PSI Bharatesh Kankanawadi, was formed to track down the accused.

Based on Naik's voluntary statement, the police recovered the stolen gold ornaments from a house in Ajjarkadu. The recovered gold ornaments weigh 548.31 grams and are valued at Rs 65.79 lakh. Further legal action has been initiated against Naik.

The police investigation revealed that Naik is a serial offender, involved in 11 previous house theft cases across Udupi district. He has faced five cases in Udupi Town Police Station, with convictions in four, and has pending cases in other police stations.

## Railway books 31 passengers for illegal alarm chain pulling

**MADGAON**

Konkan Railway has intensified its crackdown on unauthorised Alarm Chain Pulling (ACP) after repeated disruptions on Train No. 12742 Patna–Vasco Express. In a special ambush check conducted by the Railway Protection Force (RPF) between Madgaon and Thivim on December 1, a group of passengers triggered the alarm chain near Karmali and illegally deboarded the train, prompting immediate enforcement action.

A 15-member RPF team apprehended 31 passengers involved in the incident, including the leader of the group. All were taken to the Madgaon RPF Post and booked under Sections 141, 145 and 147 of the Railway Act, which deal with unauthorised interference with train operations, nuisance, and trespass.

They were produced before the Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC) court in Madgaon, which imposed a fine of ₹1,100 on the leader and ₹600 each on the remaining offenders.

Konkan Railway said the intensified checks are aimed at curbing frequent misuse of ACP, which is intended strictly for emergencies. Officials said such incidents not only delay train operations but also pose safety risks, particularly when passengers attempt to alight between stations.

The December 1 ambush check, officials noted, served as a clear warning to commuters about the seriousness of illegally pulling the alarm chain or deboarding trains in mid-section. The railway administration said it will continue similar operations along the route to deter violations and ensure safe, punctual travel for bona fide passengers.

In a statement, Konkan Railway reiterated that unauthorised ACP is a punishable offence under the Railway Act and urged passengers to use the emergency system only when strictly necessary.

## Udupi to implement ai-based traffic management system

**UDUPI**

The Udupi police department is set to modernize the city's traffic management system with the implementation of an Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based traffic management system. Superintendent of Police Hariram Shankar announced that the system will be used to issue fines and control speed.

Speaking to the media in Manipal, Shankar said that three projects have been approved by the government to install CCTV cameras in Udupi city. The Intelligent Traffic Management System will cover seven junctions with 14 cameras, and the city municipality has allocated Rs 50 lakh to install cameras at four junctions.

The cameras will detect traffic rule violations and issue fines, which will be sent directly to the violators' homes. The system will automate the process, reducing the need for traffic police to manually issue fines.

Shankar added that speed radar guns will be installed at six locations on national highways in the district to detect overspeeding vehicles and reduce accidents. The Udupi Chamber of Commerce has also partnered with the police to install CCTV cameras at 200 locations, with 25 locations already identified.

The AI-based system will enable authorities to detect traffic rule violations and take action, making the city's roads safer for commuters.

## Traffic signals installed at Kalsanka and Syndicate circle

**UDUPI**

The Udupi police department has installed traffic signals at Kalsanka Junction and Syndicate Circle in Manipal, using funds allocated by the city municipality. Superintendent of Police Hariram Shankar stated that the signals are expected to ease traffic congestion and improve road safety.

The traffic signals were installed at a cost of Rs 33 lakh, with an additional Rs 12 lakh allocated for junction development. Shankar mentioned that the signals will be adjusted according to peak hours, with a normal cycle of 50-40 seconds, and an additional 10 seconds during rush hours.

The Syndicate Circle, which experiences heavy traffic, will benefit from the signals, especially ambulances heading to Manipal Hospital. The police department will also conduct awareness campaigns to educate drivers about the new traffic signals and rules.

Shankar added that the police department is studying the pros and cons of the traffic signals and will make necessary adjustments. The city municipality will also install zebra crossings and parking lines to further improve traffic management. The new signals are expected to reduce accidents and improve overall traffic flow in the area. The police parking and traffic regulation measures are expected to complement the new signals, making Udupi's roads safer for all.

## Retired bank employee falls victim to online scam

**UDUPI**

A 72-year-old retired bank employee, Raghuram Shetty, has fallen prey to an online scam, losing a staggering Rs 21,28,055.86. The incident occurred when Shetty clicked on a Facebook ad promising various benefits from Bank of Baroda for retired bank employees.

The scammers, posing as Bank of Baroda representatives, contacted Shetty and asked him to share his personal and bank details, including the OTP. Shetty, trusting the fake officials, shared the information, allowing the scammers to transfer the funds from his account.

The police have registered a case at the Udupi CEN Police Station, and investigations are underway to track down the culprits. This incident highlights the growing threat of online scams and the importance of being cautious when sharing personal and financial information online.

Shetty's experience serves as a reminder to be vigilant when receiving unsolicited calls or emails, and to never share sensitive information without verifying the authenticity of the request. The police are urging citizens to report any suspicious activities and to take necessary precautions to protect themselves from online scams.

The incident has also raised concerns about the security measures in place to prevent such scams, and the need for banks and financial institutions to educate their customers about online safety and security.

## LMH auditorium inaugurated at CSI Lombard Memorial hospital

**UDUPI**

CSI Lombard Memorial (Mission) Hospital has taken a significant step towards community engagement with the inauguration of the LMH auditorium. The event was graced by Hemachandra Kumar, Bishop of CSI Karnataka Southern Diocese (KSD), who officially opened the auditorium by cutting the ribbon and leading the inaugural prayer.

In his address, Bishop Hemachandra Kumar praised Dr. Sushil Jathanna, Director of CSI LMH Udupi, for his dedication to serving the community. "This auditorium is a meaningful gift from Lombard Hospital to society, and I express my gratitude to Dr. Sushil Jathanna for it," he said.

The auditorium is expected to host various seminars, training sessions, and hospital-related programs, promoting community engagement and outreach. Dr. Jathanna emphasized the importance of extending the hospital's healing hands beyond its walls, saying, "Our healing hands should not remain confined to the hospital; they must reach beyond its walls."

The event was attended by prominent citizens, including Shabih Ahmed Kazi, Vice President of Udupi Zilla Muslim Okkoota (R), Jayakar Shetty Indrali, President of Udupi District Co-operative Union, and Basroor Rajeev Shetty, Chairman of Indian Red Cross Society, who all praised Dr. Jathanna's contributions to the hospital and the community.

The LMH auditorium is a testament to the hospital's commitment to serving the community, and it is expected to play a vital role in promoting healthcare and social welfare in the region.

## SC/ST community demands retention of police sub-division

**BELTHANGADY**

A meeting of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe community was held at the Ambedkar Bhavan in Belthangady with DYSPI Rohini C.K. presiding over the gathering. The community members expressed their concerns and demands, including the retention of the police sub-division in Belthangady.

The community members alleged that attempts were being made to abolish the sub-division, which is essential for the taluk. They demanded that the sub-division be retained and not abolished. They also raised issues related to false cases being filed against dalits, misuse of the SC/ST Act, and lack of basic amenities in dalit colonies.

The community members also expressed their dissatisfaction with the lack of representation and attention given to their issues by government officials. They urged the authorities to take necessary action to address their grievances and provide justice to the victims of atrocities.

DYSPI Rohini C.K. assured the community members that their demands would be taken up with the higher authorities and necessary action would be taken. She also stated that the police department would take steps to prevent the misuse of the SC/ST Act and ensure that justice is served to the victims.

The meeting was attended by police officials, including the Inspector of Belthangady Police Station, and was conducted by Head Constable Abhijit.

QUICK READ

## Police nab two for selling ganja and MDMA

**Mangaluru**

In a significant bust, Mangaluru police arrested two individuals, Shafi Ahmad and Mohammad Sameer, both from Tumakuru, for attempting to sell ganja and MDMA near the Phalguni river at Bangra-Kulur. The police team, led by Panambur ACP Srikanth K., conducted a raid based on a tip-off about illegal ganja sales in the area.The accused were caught with 12 grams of MDMA worth approximately Rs 70,000 and 275 grams of ganja valued at around Rs 10,000. A case has been registered at Kavoor Police Station under the NDPS Act Sections 8(C), 21(C), and 20(B).According to police, Shafi Ahmad is a habitual offender with nine criminal cases against him in Mangaluru and Tumakuru, while Mohammad Sameer has one previous case registered against him at the Tumakuru DCB Special Police Station.

## Karaavali Utsav 2025-26 to kick off on December 20

**Mangaluru**

The Dakshina Kannada district administration, in collaboration with local organizations, is gearing up to host the 'Karaavali Utsav 2025-26'from December 20 to January 4. The festival will feature various events at the Karaavali Utsav grounds, Kadri Park, and the city's beaches. The inaugural ceremony on December 20 will be graced by dignitaries, including the district-in-charge minister, MPs, MLAs, and officials. The event will offer a range of attractions, including stalls, exhibitions, and an amusement park. Cultural performances showcasing the region's rich heritage will be staged on Saturdays and Sundays. The highlight of the event will be the 'Musical Night' on January 3 and 4, featuring Sandalwood and Bollywood artistes at Panambur, Thannirbhavi, and Sasihithlu beaches. The deputy commissioner Darshan H.V., announced that special events are planned for January and February too.

## Complaint filed against woman for assaulting her mother

**Mangaluru**

A disturbing incident has come to light in Moodushedde, where a 35-year-old woman, Netravathi, allegedly assaulted her 65-year-old mother, Nirmala, near the Moodushedde Gram Panchayat office on November 25. A case has been registered against Netravathi at Kavu Police Station following a complaint filed by Ramitha Suryavamshi, divisional president of Hindu Mahila Samrakshana Vedike. The complaint states that videos of the assault were circulating on social media, prompting Ramitha to inquire with the police. As no complaint had been filed, she submitted a formal complaint seeking action against Netravathi and information about Nirmala's condition. Police investigation is underway, and authorities are looking into the matter seriously, aiming to ensure justice for the elderly mother.

# DRCE police station struggles amidst severe staff shortage

### Dalit leaders Sadashiva Urvastore and Girish Kumar say that they had expected justice for Dalits through the DCRE station, but that hope had now faded

**MANGALURU**

The newly established DCRE Police Station, aimed at investigating atrocities against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, is facing a severe shortage of officers and staff, hampering its effective functioning.

Despite being set up to enable swift investigations, the station has been rendered largely ineffective due to the lack of personnel. Key posts, including Inspector and Sub-Inspector, are vacant,

leaving no full-time investigating officers. The shortage of staff members has delayed FIR registrations and investigations, sparking concerns among Dalit leaders.

"Justice delayed is justice denied," said Dalit leaders Sadashiva Urvastore and Girish Kumar from Mangaluru. "We expected justice for Dalits through the DCRE station, but that hope has now faded."

The DCRE police station, covering Dakshina Kannada district, has registered 35 FIRs and received over 100 complaints since June. However, the lack of officers has hindered progress. The station handles complaints related to fake caste certificates, violation of reservation rules, land encroachments, and other civil rights violations.

SC/ST individuals can file complaints at the DCRE police station or local police stations, which will be transferred to the DCRE station. The DCRE SP office covers Dakshina Kannada, Udupi, Uttara Kannada, and Chikkamagaluru districts.

The struggle for justice continues as the DCRE police station awaits the appointment of officers and staff to effectively address the concerns of the Dalit community.

# Election fever hits Bajpe and Kinnigoli Town Panchayats

**MANGALURU**

The election process for Bajpe and Kinnigoli Town Panchayats is underway. The filing of nomination papers began on Tuesday, and the last day for submissions is December 9. Polling is scheduled for December 21, and counting will take place on December 23.

In Bajpe, a triangular contest is expected between the Congress, BJP, and SDPI, with the Nagarika Hita Rakshana Vedike also throwing its hat into the ring. The SDPI, which previously held four seats in the Bajpe Gram Panchayat, is actively collecting nomination applications, having gathered 18 on the first day.

The model code of conduct is in effect in Bajpe, prohibiting banners and flex boards, and requiring police permission for public gatherings. Election officers have been appointed for the 19 wards, with two officers handling wards 1-10 and 11-19, respectively.

In Kinnigoli, the Congress is gearing up for the election, treating it as a prestigious battle. A meeting of party leaders and workers is scheduled for December 3, with district incharge minister Dinesh Gundu Rao and other senior leaders expected to attend. The BJP is also preparing for the election, planning door-to-door visits and ward-level discussions to finalize candidates.

The election is seen as a crucial test for the parties, with ward redistribution and reservation changes likely to impact the outcome. Former gram panchayat members may need to switch wards due to the changes, adding an extra layer of complexity to the contest.

**Polling is scheduled for December 21, and counting will take place on December 23**

# DK emerges as export hub boosting local economy

**MANGALURU**

In a significant move, the Central government has declared Dakshina Kannada (DK) as an export hub, recognizing its immense potential in seafood and cashew exports. This declaration, made under the Districts as Export Hubs (DEH) initiative, is expected to give a major boost to the district's economic development.

According to MP Brijesh Chowta, the recognition is a testament to the district's ongoing efforts towards sustainable economic growth. Union Minister Jitin Prasada stated that this move will strengthen local industries, enhance value-added activities, and improve the district's global market connectivity.

The DEH initiative aims to promote balanced and sustainable economic growth across the country. To support this, a District Export Action Plan (DEAP) has been formulated, focusing on improving export infrastructure, including first-mile linkages to New Mangalore Port, warehousing, and logistics facilities.

A District Export Promotion Committee (DEPC) has also been formed to facilitate coordination among district authorities, exporters, and other stakeholders. The committee will work towards addressing export bottlenecks, including logistics and connectivity issues.

The recognition is expected to open up new opportunities for enterprises in the region, with seafood and cashew being the key products with strong export potential. The New Mangalore Port's strong connectivity is seen as a major advantage in promoting exports.

# Prison foils attempt to smuggle MDMA into jail, one held

**MANGALURU**

In a major security breach, prison authorities at the district prison here detained a man, Ashiq, a resident of Urva Store, for attempting to smuggle MDMA into the jail hidden inside a toothpaste tube. The suspect was handed over to the Barke police for further investigation.

According to prison superintendent Sharanabasappa's complaint, Ashiq had brought 40 packets of biscuits, one packet of mixture, one packet of chakuli, and a tube of toothpaste for undertrial inmate Anvith. Security personnel Shashikumar Moolinmane and Shekhar D K, who were on duty, noticed something suspicious inside the toothpaste tube during a routine inspection.

Further verification revealed two pieces of plastic straw and a small plastic pouch containing white, crystal-like powder suspected to be MDMA. Ashiq reportedly told officials that he received the items from a person near the photocopy shop in front of the prison, allegedly on the directions of Sachin Talapady.

Barke police have registered a case, and further investigation is underway. The swift action by the prison authorities has prevented a potentially serious security breach.

# CM Siddaramaiah meets KC Venugopal amidst power-sharing speculations

**MANGALURU**

Amidst speculation of a power-sharing deal between CM Siddaramaiah and DCM DK Shivakumar, the former met AICC general secretary KC Venugopal in Mangaluru to discuss political developments.

The meeting has sparked curiosity, with insiders suggesting it might be related to the ongoing power-sharing talks between Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar. Earlier, Siddaramaiah had a cryptic remark, "Politics is not permanent, it's not our father's property," in a video circulating on social media.

The comment was made when Siddaramaiah visited Shivakumar's residence for breakfast, and later spoke to media. When asked about the power-sharing deal, Siddaramaiah smiled and said, "Whatever will happen, will happen. I'm not bothered."

The video shows Siddaramaiah speaking to Beluru Gopalakrishna and Udaya Kadlooru, but the conversation is unclear. However, his statement, "Politics is not permanent," is audible. The development has left many guessing about the future of the Congress government in Karnataka.

# Red stone mining applications fall short despite eased rules

**MANGALURU**

Despite the government's relaxation of rules for red stone mining, the response has been underwilling, with fewer applications than expected, said Dakshina Kannada deputy commissioner Darshan H.V.

Addressing a press meet, Darshan stated that the price of red stone has decreased from Rs 65 to Rs 45 and may further drop to around Rs 40. "We have issued 59 permits under Rule 3A, and 12 applications are pending, which will be cleared soon," he added.

The DC expressed disappointment with the low number of applications, stating that more submissions would help streamline the process. Meanwhile, efforts are underway to identify and approve sand blocks, with 19 currently active and 42 more in the pipeline.

On infrastructure development, Darshan said that Rs 7 crore has been sanctioned for pothole repair in Mangaluru, with work set to begin soon. The DC also mentioned that he works one day a week at the old DC office to maintain the building and has allocated space to the SAF unit.

The meeting was attended by ZP CEO Naravade Vinayak Karbari, Additional DC Raju K., and DCP Mithun.

# CM Siddaramaiah assures land for Shivagiri Matha Branch

**MANGALURU**

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has assured to provide 5 acres of land for establishing a branch of Shivagiri Matha in Udupi or Mangaluru. The announcement was made during the Narayana Guru-Gandhi Dialogue Centenary celebrations at Mangaluru University.

Addressing the gathering, Siddaramaiah stated that he has instructed officials to identify suitable land for the matha's branch. BK Hariprasad, a local leader, welcomed the decision and recalled that the CM had earlier sanctioned Rs 2 crore for the Narayana Guru Study Centre at Mangaluru University.

KC Venugopal, Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, Lok Sabha, emphasized the significance of Narayana Guru's and Gandhi's ideologies, saying they are enshrined in the country's constitution. He warned that these values are under threat and urged people to uphold them.

Speaker UT Khader announced plans to name a park and stadium after Narayana Guru and Gandhi. Home Minister G Parameshwara, Minister for Women and Child Welfare Lakshmi Hebbalkar, and other dignitaries attended the event.

Shivagiri Matha Secretary Shubhagananda Swamiji appealed to the CM to provide land for the matha's branch, citing its importance for the community. The matha's representatives submitted a memorandum to Siddaramaiah, seeking his support for the project.

# Precaution key to managing diabetes: Dr. Mohammed Ismail

**MANGALURU**

Diabetes, a chronic and ancient disease, has been affecting millions of people in the country, said Dr. Mohammed Ismail, Observer Representative of Karnataka Medical Council. He emphasized the need for awareness, precaution, and knowledge about the disease, its treatment, and management.

Inaugurating the World Diabetes Day celebrations at Kanchuru Medical College, Ismail highlighted the importance of understanding the disease. Dr. U.K. Monu, President of Kanchuru Medical Sciences Institute, urged participants to make the most of the medical workshop.

Dr. Devadas Rai, Head of the Department of Medicine, explained that diabetes is a lifestyle disease caused by factors like work pressure, obesity, excessive sugar consumption, and lack of exercise.

The workshop featured lectures by renowned medical experts, including Dr. Saurabh Bhat, Dr. Prashant Hubbali, Dr. Sudeep K., Dr. Akhila Bhandarkar, Dr. Vijay Kumar, and Dr. M. Prajna.

A quiz competition on diabetes was organized, and winners were awarded prizes. The event was attended by around 190 doctors, medical students, and postgraduate students.

Dr. Srikant Hegde, Organizing Secretary, thanked the participants, while Dr. Lakshita Suresh and Dr. Abdul Faruqui moderated the event.

# Khader directs quick clearance of single site applications

**MANGALURU**

Speaker of the Legislative Assembly UT Khader has instructed officials to clear single site and 9/11 applications without delay, adhering to the stipulated time frame. He expressed discontent over complaints of public being made to run from pillar to post for these applications.

Addressing a meeting with senior officials at the District Administration Office, Khader emphasized the need for clarity on single site connections, especially regarding road access. Deepa Cholan, Principal Secretary, Urban Development Department, announced that a circular would be issued soon to simplify the process, allowing applicants to submit affidavits along with their applications.

Cholan added that the Urban Development Authority would scrutinize applications and forward them to concerned Gram Panchayats, eliminating the need for multiple visits. The government aims to resolve issues related to 9/11 rules and single site connections, ensuring hassle-free processing.

Khader stressed the importance of providing civic amenities, playgrounds, and parks in layouts, while preventing unscientific constructions. He warned against causing inconvenience to the public, stating that action would be taken against erring officials.

The meeting was attended by Venkatachala, Commissioner, Urban Planning; Darshan HV, District Collector; and Naravade Vinayak Karbari, Chief Executive Officer, District Panchayat, among others.

# Power not permanent, says Minister Satish Jarkiholi

**MANGALURU**

Minister Satish Jarkiholi has emphasized that power is not permanent and leaders should be prepared to relinquish it. Responding to questions about the meeting between Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and KC Venugopal, Jarkiholi said, "Power is not permanent for anyone. One should leave power at some point, even if it's after 10 years. The high command will decide when it's time to step down."

Addressing a press conference in Mangaluru, Jarkiholi dismissed speculation about the meeting, saying, "The CM has come for a program, that's all. There was no political discussion. If you want to know what transpired between Venugopal and the CM, ask them yourself."

When asked about the slogans in favor of Siddaramaiah and DK Shivakumar at Mangaluru airport, Jarkiholi replied, "Slogans won't help. There's no confusion within our party. Everything is clear, and both leaders have already discussed matters."

Jarkiholi's comments come amid speculation about power-sharing talks between Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar.

QUICK READ

## Bengaluru businessman robbed of over ₹1 cr cash

**BENGALURU**

The Hebbagodi police arrested a 39-year-old cloth shop owner, Srinivasa Murthy H.K., and his associate Arun Kumar B.N., for stealing ₹1.14 crore from a businessman's apartment in Bengaluru. The duo had befriended the victim and learned about the cash stored at his home. On November 9, while the family was away in Kolar, they broke in after days of reconnaissance. The accused avoided using phones and wore helmets to hide their identities. Police recovered the stolen cash from the shop and friends' houses. Officials said the money would be reported to the Income Tax Department for further investigation.

## German delegation praises KSRTC's accessible transport

**BENGALURU**

A German delegation from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, along with GIZ and embassy officials, visited KSRTC's Bengaluru office on December 2 to review inclusive mobility initiatives. The team experienced Dhwani Spandana–On-Board, an assistive audio-navigation system that improves bus access for visually impaired commuters. KSRTC Managing Director Akram Pasha highlighted the system's national award and its development by the Raised Lines Foundation, scaled with GIZ under the Green Urban Mobility Innovation project. Already operational on KSRTC and Mysuru buses, the system impressed the delegation. Director General Christine Toetzke praised KSRTC for pioneering innovative, user-friendly transport technologies in India.

# Venugopal controls Cong, not Kharge: Chalavadi

Narayanaswamy criticized the Congress for ignoring state issues due to internal rivalries between the Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister

**BENGALURU**

Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council, Chalavadi Narayanaswamy, has claimed that Congress's real high command in Karnataka is KC Venugopal, not Mallikarjun Kharge.

Speaking about the recent meeting of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Venugopal in Bengaluru, Narayanaswamy said the state has been confused over Congress leadership, but now it is clear that Venugopal holds the power.

He criticized the Congress for ignoring state issues due to internal rivalries between the Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister. He said Venugopal is managing different groups within the party and deciding their survival, while the interests of farmers, Dalits, and North Karnataka are being neglected.

Narayanaswamy accused Congress leaders of forgetting the welfare of Dalits and the backward regions.

He highlighted that 31 bills are already pending, and 22 new bills are being added, questioning whether this session is for passing legislation or serving party interests. He also criticized the government for considering Bengaluru-related bills in Belgaum and demanded a special session to address the concerns of North Karnataka.

> **Venugopal is managing different groups within the party and deciding their survival, while the interests of farmers, Dalits, and North Karnataka are being neglected.**
> —Chalavadi Narayanaswamy, LoP in the Legislative Council

He pointed out that leaders of North Karnataka have failed to develop the region despite holding Chief Ministerial positions, leaving areas like Kalyana Karnataka and Kittur Karnataka backward. Narayanaswamy said the Congress focuses more on retaining power than addressing regional inequalities and welfare issues.

He also stressed the need for the party to prioritize state development over internal politics, warning that neglecting farmers and Dalits could have long-term consequences for the party's credibility in Karnataka.

# Gandhi Bazaar footpath cleared of encroachments

**BENGALURU**

The Bengaluru Central Municipal Corporation carried out a major operation today to clear long-standing footpath encroachments in the Gandhi Bazaar area of Chikkapet division.

Commissioner Rajendra Cholan said the action was taken after several warnings were issued to street vendors who continued to occupy unauthorized spaces, creating difficulties for pedestrians.

Officials explained that around 120 street vendors had already been given proper locations to run their stalls. These designated spots were meant to help them continue their business without blocking public pathways. However, many vendors had expanded into additional areas beyond the allotted spaces, leading to congestion and safety concerns for people walking through the busy stretch.

As the vendors did not follow repeated instructions to vacate the extra spaces, the Corporation launched a clearance drive early this morning. A team led by Chikkapet Executive Engineer Pradeep Kumar removed the unauthorized structures and restored the footpath area. The operation involved two JCBs, seven tractors, three lorries and about 40 personnel. During the drive, five shops that had extended their business onto the footpath were also cleared.

Officials stated that such actions were necessary to ensure smooth movement for thousands of pedestrians who use the Gandhi Bazaar roads daily. They added that street vending can continue without disruption if vendors operate strictly within their assigned areas.

The Corporation has now warned that legal action will be taken against anyone who again encroaches on the footpaths or trades outside approved zones.

Assistant Executive Engineers Krishnakumar and Ramegowda, marshals and several staff members were present during the operation, ensuring that the clearance was carried out smoothly and safely for everyone involved.

# Min reviews ongoing metro, road works

**BENGALURU**

The Bengaluru North City Corporation carried out a joint inspection on Wednesday after Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda reviewed the ongoing metro and road works along the Outer Ring Road and Bellary Road.

The Minister visited key stretches from Nagawara Junction to Yelahanka and issued several important instructions to speed up the work and reduce traffic problems faced by the public.

At Nagawara Junction, he directed Metro officials to finish the pending work quickly. He asked them to clear extra materials and debris from the site and ensure that the service road is fit and safe for regular traffic. At Veerannapalya Junction, where large amounts of debris were found, he ordered immediate cleaning and instructed that barricades must not block the flow of vehicles.

Near Venkatam Cafe, the Minister noted that both sides of the Outer Ring Road had been closed for work. He instructed the officials to open at least one lane and maintain the stretch in good condition. At Esteem Mall on Bellary Road, he asked NHAI officials to create smooth entry and exit points for the service road and provide required space for bus bays on both sides.At Kodigehalli Junction, he expressed concern over the inconvenience caused to people since 2021 and directed officials to ensure smoother movement of vehicles. During the Hebbal Road inspection, he instructed the teams from NHAI, Metro and Uttara Nagara Corporation to maintain the road properly for traffic.The Minister also ordered an intensive cleanliness drive from Hebbal to Bagalur Cross, to be carried out jointly by the Uttara Nagar Palika, NHAI and Metro teams. The inspection was attended by senior officials, including Uttara Nagar Palika Commissioner Pommala Sunil Kumar, Metro Managing Director Ravi Shankar, BWSSB Chairman Ram Prasat Manohar and representatives from NHAI and BDA.

# B'luru allotted 5,700 EV buses under FAME, PM e-Drive schemes: MP

**BENGALURU**

The Central Government has sanctioned 5,700 electric buses (EVs) for Bengaluru under the FAME and PM-Drive schemes, aiming to promote eco-friendly and sustainable city transport, said MP Tejaswi Surya. Out of these, 1,221 buses are currently operational in the city. Addressing the media here on Wednesday, Tejaswi expressed his satisfaction over the EV bus rollout, highlighting that Bengaluru is among the leading cities to receive such a fleet. Across India, 21,000 EV buses have been sanctioned under these schemes to modernize public transport and reduce carbon emissions.

**Min complains of tech glitch**

However, concerns about the technical performance of the buses have emerged with Karnataka Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy stating about around 13,000 reported cases of breaking down of EV buses, primarily involving private operators handling maintenance under the GCC model. Reddy even claimed that a letter has been sent to Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy, seeking action to address battery recharge issues, driver training gaps, and maintenance problems.

# Develop professional skills outside of academics to succeed: VC

**BENGALURU**

Bangalore University Vice-Chancellor Prof M Jayakar Shetty has called upon students to develop professional skills aligned with their degrees to succeed in jobs or businesses.

He was speaking at the 'Graduation Ceremony – 2025' of MTech and MCA students at the college hall here on Wednesday.

He emphasized the importance of applying one's academic knowledge in practical work. "It is possible to excel in any profession only when you learn skills related to your field. Your degree is the foundation, but your skills will build your career," he said. Highlighting the role of family support, he said, "Parents have trusted you with their dreams. They expect you to graduate and secure a high-level job. It is your responsibility to honor their hopes through dedication and hard work."

RV Engineering College, known for value-based education, offers students numerous opportunities for holistic personality development, the VC noted. He encouraged graduates to continue learning, exploring professional growth, and contributing to society.

The ceremony was attended by National Education Committee Trust chairman Dr MP Shyam, Principal Dr KN Subramanya, Vice-Principal Dr KS Geetha, Dr Radhakrishna, Placement Director Dr D Ranganath, along with faculty and staff. Students were congratulated for completing their programmes and reminded that their learning journey extends beyond graduation. Practical skills, discipline, and perseverance, he said, will be the keys to future success.

# Agniveers graduate at Madras Engineer Group parade

**BENGALURU**

The Madras Engineer Group & Centre hosted the Passing Out Parade for the sixth batch of 788 Agniveers, marking the completion of their rigorous training and induction into the Indian Army. The iconic Drill Square came alive with ceremonial precision as the young soldiers marched to the beats of the military band, showcasing the high standards and discipline instilled by the Centre.

Brigadier Ajay Singh Thakur, Commandant of the Madras Engineer Group & Centre, reviewed the parade and praised the Agniveers for their professionalism and dedication. A key moment of the ceremony was the presentation of the 'Gaurav Padak', where parents proudly pinned the rank insignia of 'Thambi Sapper' on their sons, symbolizing their transformation from trainees to soldiers.

The Centre arranged special reception, stay, and transport facilities for families to ensure they could participate fully in the celebrations. The event concluded with veterans, senior officers, and guests interacting with families, sharing in the pride and joy of this significant milestone.

The Passing Out Parade was a celebration of courage, commitment, and the values upheld by the Madras Sappers and the Indian Army.

# Stop selling non-Nandini brands or lose licence: KMF

**BENGALURU :** Karnataka Cooperative Milk Producers' Federation Limited (KMF) has issued strict orders to its Nandini booth owners, banning the sale of any products other than Nandini brand. The move comes after reports that several booths were selling snacks, water bottles, and other branded goods alongside Nandini milk, curd, and ghee. The KMF has warned that booths violating this directive risk license cancellation. In the first stage, notices will be issued to shopkeepers found selling non-Nandini products. KMF Managing Director Shivaswamy emphasized that the federation is committed to protecting the brand's integrity, which has earned national and international recognition. "Nandini ghee is even used in Tirupati laddus. Selling other brands dilutes the value of our products," he said. Some booth owners, who raised concerns about high rents and potential losses if restricted to only Nandini products, have agreed to comply following the notices. "We understand the directive and will stop selling other items from now on," said a local shopkeeper.

# White-topping works gain pace across Bengaluru

**BENGALURU**

The Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) is accelerating white-topping works across the city, aiming to improve road quality and traffic flow, said B-SMILE Chief Engineer Dr Raghavendra Prasad.

Under the guidance of Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao and instructions from Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, ongoing projects are being closely monitored for timely completion.

White-topping works are planned for 161.78 km across 16 packages at an estimated cost of Rs 1,700 crore, including Rs 800 crore from state government grants and Rs 900 crore under Escrow funds. Currently, 104 roads covering 145.68 km across 14 packages are under progress at a cost of Rs 1,487 crore. Tenders are underway for 14 more roads covering 16.1 km.

Safety measures have been made mandatory during installation of water pipelines, stormwater drains, underground ducts, and other utilities in the work zones. White-topping is being implemented according to IRC:SP:76-2015 standards, ensuring long-lasting concrete roads, reduced maintenance, and smoother travel.

NARI SHAKTI

# *Women-headed AI CultureTech firm joins elite global cohort of innovators*

**BENGALURU**

Culturelytics, the pioneering AI-driven CultureTech Company transforming how organisations measure and manage culture, has been selected by Forbes India and D Globalist as one of the Select 200 Companies with Global Business Potential for 2025.

This highly regarded cohort represents over 1,000 founders, including nearly 20% of India's unicorn leaders, and innovation-driven companies that have collectively raised more than USD 19 billion and expanded into 30+ countries. The selection places Culturelytics among a distinguished group of ventures positioned to scale globally and influence the next decade of organisational strategy.

Yeshasvini Ramaswamy, founder & CEO of Culturelytics, said, "Being part of the 'Select 200' reinforces a belief we held long before the world was ready: culture is a business technology. Culturelytics was built to decode culture with behavioural science and responsible AI, enabling leaders to treat culture with the same strategic rigour as financial and operational metrics. As workplaces grow more complex and globally interconnected, culture intelligence is becoming essential for CEOs — not optional. This recognition strengthens our resolve to take CultureTech from India to the world."

Smita Tharoor, co-founder of Culturelytics, said, "Culture will define the next era of leadership. Around the world, organisations are struggling with belonging, trust, inclusion, and cross-cultural cohesion. Culturelytics brings clarity and science to challenges that were once addressed only through intuition. Being recognised among global-first innovators signals how urgently leaders need this intelligence — and how relevant an India-born solution can be for the world."

QUICK READ

## Candlelight rally marks World AIDS Day awareness

**Chikkaballapur**

A candlelight rally was organised in Chikkaballapur as part of World AIDS Day 2025. The event was jointly conducted by the District AIDS Prevention Unit, the District Health and Family Welfare Department, the District Legal Services Authority, and TI-NGO staff to raise awareness among the public. Students from various institutions participated in the rally, holding candles to symbolize solidarity and spreading awareness about HIV prevention. The programme highlighted the importance of eliminating stigma and educating communities about the disease. District Health Officer Dr. Lokesh Kumar flagged off the rally and encouraged the students to actively participate in awareness efforts. AIDS Prevention Programme Officer Dr. Usha also took part and guided the rally, ensuring smooth conduct of the event.

## Telecom consumer outreach program on December 5

**Chitradurga**

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) will organize a "Telecom Consumer Outreach" program on December 5 at 11 a.m. at the STEPI Auditorium of SJEM Technology Institute on National Highway-4, Chitradurga. Officials from the regional office of TRAI will address the event and explain consumers' rights and responsibilities as telecom subscribers. With Karnataka having over 70 million mobile subscribers and 5.88 million landline users, many are unaware of TRAI regulations. The program will cover grievance redressal, porting numbers to other providers, stopping unwanted commercial communications and calls, and rules regarding value-added services. Additionally, a session on cybercrime and online fraud will be conducted by experts from Karnataka Police's Cyber Crime Department, highlighting prevalent cyber scams. The public is invited to participate and learn about protecting their interests. For more information, contact K. Muralidhar at 09449005588.

## Drug-free India and organ donation awareness

**Chitradurga**

Dr. B.C. Bhagavan, Vice-Chancellor of Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences, stressed rising student substance abuse at the "Drug-Free India and Organ Donation Awareness Campaign and Rally" held at Onake Obavva Circle. Organized with district colleges, the event promoted healthy lifestyles and organ donation. Dr. Bhagavan urged medical students to avoid harmful habits and lead responsible lives. The university has held district awareness programs for three months across 1,500 campuses to create drug-free environments. He asked students to pledge against using or selling addictive substances and highlighted the urgent need for organ donation, noting the gap between 17,000 donated organs and over 300,000 patients awaiting transplants. Other dignitaries echoed the importance of healthcare and community responsibility.

# MP Prabha Mallikarjun raises demand for BSNL tower installation

MP Dr. Prabha Mallikarjun urges immediate BSNL tower installation in villages and calls for pending employee pay revision

**DAVANAGERE**

During the Zero Hour in Parliament on Wednesday, MP Dr. Prabha Mallikarjun urged the Central Government to address the long-pending issue of installing BSNL mobile towers in several villages of Davanagere district. She highlighted that villages such as Haleshpur, Aralikatte, and Chikkakogalur in Channagiri taluk, Mussenahalu in Honnali taluk, and Konganahosur and Intalthanda in Harapanahalli taluk continue to struggle without basic mobile network coverage.

Dr. Mallikarjun reminded the House that the Digital India Mission aims to eliminate the digital divide and ensure seamless connectivity across the nation. However, residents of these villages are still deprived of essential mobile services. Despite repeatedly bringing the matter to the attention of authorities, no progress has been seen. She informed that four letters were sent to the Shivamogga Zonal Office, two to the Bellary Zonal Office, and additional letters to the Ministry of Communications on March 16 and September 20. Although the Ministry responded on October 17, there has been no concrete movement on the installation of BSNL towers.

Due to this lack of connectivity, students, farmers, and small businesses face significant disruptions in digital payments, online education, telemedicine, and emergency communication. This prolonged delay is widening the rural-urban digital gap and hampering access to essential services.

She urged the Communications Minister to direct BSNL to immediately install towers in the affected villages to ensure reliable and equitable digital access.

The MP also demanded that the Central Government remove the affordability clause related to the 3rd pay revision for BSNL employees, pending since 2017. She termed the clause unjust, noting that BSNL, being a service-oriented public sector undertaking, should not be evaluated solely on profit. She appealed for the revision to be granted by March 31, 2026.

# Differently-abled inclusion and empowerment emphasized

**CHITRADURGA**

On the occasion of International Day of Persons with Disabilities, M.K. Tajpeer, Chairman of the Urban Development Authority, emphasized that providing respect and equal opportunities to differently-abled individuals is a collective responsibility. Speaking at the event held at Sri Maharshi Valmiki Bhavan near Madakari Circle, organized jointly by the district administration, District Panchayat, Women and Child Development Department, Disabled and Senior Citizens Empowerment Department, Youth Empowerment and Sports Department, School Education Department, Karnataka State Government Disabled Employees Association (District Unit), and various NGOs, Tajpeer highlighted the importance of societal inclusion.

He stressed that family members, teachers, and government officials should treat differently-abled individuals with dignity rather than pity, and ensure they receive equal opportunities. "Many differently-abled people possess exceptional talents, sometimes surpassing ordinary individuals. They have made remarkable contributions in education, sports, and other fields. Government departments must facilitate access to their homes and enable them to participate fully in society," he said.

**On International Day of Persons with Disabilities, officials urged respect, equal opportunities, and empowerment for differently-abled individuals, honoring achievers and promoting social inclusion**

Other speakers, including R. Shivanna, President of District Guarantee Scheme Implementation Authority, and Dr. R. Rangaswamy, Deputy Secretary of District Panchayat, highlighted the need for government support in empowering differently-abled individuals, promoting self-reliance, and integrating them into the mainstream. D.N. Mailarappa, Vice President, stressed reserving funds locally to ensure social, educational, and economic inclusion. District Disability Welfare Officer J. Vaishali noted that, as per the 2011 census, 35,971 differently-abled individuals reside in the district and require barrier-free facilities.

During the program, students with disabilities who excelled in the 2024–25 SSLC exams were honored, along with self-employed individuals and achievers in arts supported by the Lasika Foundation.

The event was attended by police officials, government officers, representatives of NGOs, and differently-abled participants, reflecting a unified commitment to inclusion, empowerment, and recognition of talents across sectors.

# Dharmasthala Rural Development Project empowers women

**RAMANAGARA**

The Dharmasthala Rural Development Project is actively working to empower women by creating awareness and promoting financial literacy, said Shradha Amit, Chief Executive Officer of Kshema Vana. She was speaking after inaugurating a women's seminar organized by the Shree Kshetra Dharmasthala Rural Development Trust on Tuesday at the Manjunath Convention Hall in Bidadi. She noted that the organisation has been extending extensive support to help women achieve excellence across various sectors while prioritizing their empowerment.

Shradha highlighted that women must utilise the monthly information shared under the Women's Knowledge Development Programme and understand how visits to different departments can benefit them. By gaining this knowledge, they can shed misconceptions and move towards informed decision-making, ultimately becoming part of the social mainstream, she added.

Dr. Mamatha, head of SDM Institute of Ayurvedic Hospital, shared insights into the benefits of Ayurvedic medicines. Ramnagaram Women's Police Station CPI Shobha, who attended as chief guest, provided guidance on women's safety, legal protections, and issues arising from mobile phone misuse.

An exhibition featuring more than 17 stalls showcased products created by women, including self-employment items, nutritious food products, and other handmade goods. Winners of rangoli and bouquet competitions were felicitated, and women who excelled in dairy farming and self-employment were honoured. Cultural performances by members of the organisation entertained the audience.

## Scholarship applications invited for performing arts students

**CHIKKABALLAPUR**

Applications have been invited for scholarships from eligible candidates aged 16 to 24 who are pursuing studies in Carnatic music, Hindustani music, dance, Sugama Sangeetha, and Gamaka. For the 2025–26 academic year, the Karnataka Sangeetha Nritya Academy will select students based on mobile video recordings submitted as part of the application process. Detailed information can be found on the Academy's Facebook page or downloaded from its official website. Completed applications must be submitted to the Academy along with required documents as per the prescribed format. Applicants must upload their course-related mobile video recordings to a pen drive and send it along with the application either by post or in person to the Karnataka Sangeetha Nritya Academy, Kannada Bhavana, Bengaluru.

# Education builds self-respect, says UT Khader

**KONAJE**

Legislative Assembly Speaker U.T. Khader emphasized that education is the cornerstone for building a life of self-respect. Speaking at the inauguration of the Moule Ismail Haji Memorial Library and Canteen at the Government Primary School in Nadupadavu during the school's annual day celebrations, he urged parents to take responsibility for guiding their children toward excellence and to dedicate valuable time for their development.

Khader noted that the Nadupadavu school has gradually developed into a model institution, providing significant benefits to the children of the village while contributing to the overall progress of the community. He highlighted that schools play a vital role not just in academics but in shaping the character and confidence of students, making them capable citizens.

The event was presided over by School Management Board President C.M. Sharif Pattori, who addressed the gathering. Community leaders including Ibrahim Haji, Abdul Nasir K.K., Nazar Sha Pattori, Puttu Haji, Purushottam, Ummar Haji, Riyaz, Iqbal Balil, Javed, and others were present. Principal Prema announced the names of the award recipients.

Special recognition was given to outstanding alumni, including former student Foumya Abubakkar for her academic achievements. Retired education officer M.G. Manjunath, transferred teacher B. Shivaram Das, retired teachers Nag Prabha and Evjita Disouza, and former staff member Khatijamma were also honored for their contributions. Nadupadavu community leader N.S. Nasir welcomed the dignitaries, underscoring the collaborative effort behind the school's success and its positive impact on the village's educational landscape.

**ನಗರಸಭಾ ಕಾರ್ಯಾಲಯ, ಹೊಸಕೋಟೆ**
ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ಗ್ರಾಮಾಂತರ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ–562114,
ದೂರವಾಣಿ:–27931221, ಸಹಾಯವಾಣಿ: 27931759
Email:-itstaff_ulb_hosakote@yahoo.com Website: www.hosakotecity.mrc.gov.in

ನಂ.ನಸಹೊ/ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಶಾಖೆ/ಟೆಂಡರ್/ಸಿಆರ್/08/2025–26 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 03.12.2025

"ಮರು ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ" (ಇ–ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಕೆ.ಟಿ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮೂಲಕ)

ಪೌರಾಯುಕ್ತರು ನಗರಸಭೆ ಹೊಸಕೋಟೆ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ಗ್ರಾಮಾಂತರ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ ಇವರಿಂದ 2025–26ನೇ ಸಾಲಿನ ಅಮೃತ್–2.0 ಯೋಜನೆಯಡಿ ಈ ಕೆಳಕಂಡ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗೆ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸ್ಟ್ಯಾಂಡರ್ಡ್ ಡಾಕ್ಯುಮೆಂಟ್ 02 ರ ಪ್ರಕಾರ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ನ್ನು ದ್ವಿ–ಲಕೋಟೆ ಪದ್ಧತಿಯಡಿ ಅರ್ಹ ದರ್ಜೆಯ ನೋಂದಾಯಿತ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರಿಂದ ಇ–ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮುಖಾಂತರ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ನ್ನು ಕರೆಯಲಾಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ.
ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳ ವಿವರ (1)DMA/2025-26/OW/WORK_INDENT47899/Call-2, ಅಂದಾಜು ಮೊತ್ತ ರೂ. 49.82 ಲಕ್ಷಗಳು, ಇ.ಎಂ.ಡಿ. ರೂ.84,394/–
(1) ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ನ್ನು ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ ಮತ್ತು ಸಮಯ 19.12.2025 ರ ಸಂಜೆ 5:30 ಗಂಟೆಯವರೆಗೆ ಹಾಗೂ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಬಿಡ್ ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ ಮತ್ತು ಸಮಯ 22.12.2025 ರ ಬೆಳಿಗ್ಗೆ 11:30 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ ನಿಗಧಿಪಡಿಸಲಾಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ. (2) ಟೆಂಡರ್ ದಾಖಲೆಗಳನ್ನು ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರದ ಇ–ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/#/portal/portal-home ನಿಂದ ಡೌನ್‌ಲೋಡ್ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳುವುದು.

ಸಹಿ/–
ಪೌರಾಯುಕ್ತರು
ನಗರಸಭೆ, ಹೊಸಕೋಟೆ.

ಪಾಸಾಸಂಇ/ವಾ.ಪ್ರ/ಎಸ್‌ಎಸ್‌ಸಿ/4184/2025–26

**BENGALURU NORTH UNIVERSITY**
Sri Devaraj Urs Extension, Tamaka, Kolar-563 103.
e-Mail: bnuregistrar@karnataka.gov.in
Website: www.bnu.karnataka.gov.in
Dated: 01.12.2025

**E-Tender Notification**

The Registrar, Bengaluru North University, Tamaka, Kolar invites Bids from the eligible and reputed firms for the various Tenders listed below as per the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurements (KTPP) Act, the Tenderers who have registered under E-Governance, Department of Karnataka may participate through the kppp portal and download the tender document from the website **http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** from **29.11.2025**

**(1)** Tender for Comprehensive Annual Maintenance Contract of UPS, Water Filters, Solar Water heaters, CCTV, Air Conditioner, High mast Steert Lights and Digital Interactive Panel Boards for Bangalore North University, Tamaka, kolar-Tender no: BNU/2025-26/IND0056. **(2)** Procurement of Chemicals Glass wares and Lab Equipment to PG center Mangasandra and University college of Education Chikkaballapura. Tender no: BNU/2025-26/IND0057.

**Sd/- REGISTRAR**
**Bengaluru North University, Tamaka, Kolar**
DIPR/Kolar/R.O.No.382/KSMCA/2025-26

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

It is hereby informed to the general public one Smt. G.Bhanumathi, wife of Gajendra, resident of No. 144/2, Ranganatha Layout, Harohalli Town has obtained the loan from Union Bank of India (Erstwhile Andhra Bank), Harohalli Branch, and pledged the documents in respect of the property mentioned below. Now the said G.Bhanumathi has approached another Bank for enhancement of loan and got the loan discharged and received some documents and at the same time, some of the documents have been misplaced previously at the time of merging of Andhra Bank with the Union Bank of India, the said documents got misplaced and are presently not traceable despite a thorough search conducted by the Bank which are as follows: 1. Original Registered Sale Deed dated 30-09-2006, registered as Document No. KNK-1-05122/2006-07, CD No. KNKD 59, Book–1, registered on 19-10-2006, executed by Smt. Byramma, wife of Nagaraja Shetty, in favour of M.Mallappa, son of Madaiah, Kelagala Beedhi, Harohalli Village, Harohalli Hobli, Kanakapura Taluk. 2. Three Certified Copies issued by Gram Panchayath, Harohalli: o Three Nos. of Certified copies of Demand Register Extract (Year 2006–07) in respect of Katha No. 560/423B/493/3. 3. Approved Plan issued by Gram Panchayath, Harohalli. Members of the public are hereby cautioned not to deal with or act upon the above documents, if found, as they are misplaced and may be misused.

**SCHEDULE**

Property bearing Old Kaneshumari No. 560/423B/493/3, New No. 560/423B/493/3 measuring East to West 40 feet, North to South 30 feet, situated at: Harohalli Village, Harohalli Gram Panchayath, (erstwhile Kanakapura Taluk) presently Harohalli Taluk, (erstwhile Ramanagara District) presently Bengaluru South District and bounded on the: EAST BY: Private property sold by Nandi Sanjeevappa Bettappa, WEST BY: 20 feet road, NORTH BY: Property No. 4 belonging to Suresh, SOUTH BY: Property No. 2 belonging to H.V.Vijaykumari.

This notice is issued in the interest of the Bank and the concerned customer.

If anyone finds any of the above documents, they are requested to immediately return them to the:

**Manager, Union Bank of India, Harohalli Branch, Harohalli Town. Harohalli Town, Contact: 9321414581**

**Smt. G.Bhanumathi, W/o Gajendra, No. 144/2, Ranganatha Layout, Bengaluru South District. Contact: 9986538562.**

**BENGALURU CENTRAL CITY CORPORATION**
Office of the Executive Engineer, Shivaji Nagar Division, Thimmaiah Road, Queens Road, Bengaluru

**Tender Notification No. EE/SJN/E-PROC/03/2025-26 Date: 03-12-2025**

**INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER**

**(Two Cover) (Through e-Procurement Portal GOK website: https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in only)**

The Executive Engineer (Shivaji Nagar Division), BCCC, Bangalore invites tenders from eligible Contractors registered in Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike or equivalent registration with CPWD/KPWD/Railways/MES/National Highway or any State Government Organizations for the construction of work detailed in the table below. (Standard Tender Document-KW-4).

| Sl. No. | Name of the work |
|---|---|
| | **General Category** |
| 1 | Filling up of Pot Holes in Ward No. 117 Vasanth Nagar for the Year 2025-26. **Estimate cost (Rs. in Lakhs):** 20.00. **EMD (in Rs.):** 50000.00. |
| 2 | Filling up of Pot Holes in Ward No. 118 Sampangirama Nagar for the Year 2025-26. **Estimate cost (Rs in Lakhs):** 20.00. **EMD (in Rs):** 50000.00. |
| 3 | Filling up of Pot Holes in Ward No. 119 Shivaji Nagar for the Year 2025-26. **Estimate cost (Rs in Lakhs):** 20.00. **EMD (in Rs):** 50000.00. |
| 4 | Filling up of Pot Holes in Ward No. 120 Bharathi Nagar for the Year 2025-26. **Estimate cost (Rs in Lakhs):** 20.00. **EMD (in Rs):** 50000.00. |
| 5 | Filling up of Pot Holes in Ward No. 121 Ulsoor for the Year 2025-26. **Estimate cost (Rs in Lakhs):** 20.00. **EMD (in Rs):** 50000.00. |
| 6 | Removal of Silt, debris and Ward Maintenance Works in Ward No. 118 Sampangirama Nagar for the Year 2025-26. **Estimate cost (Rs in Lakhs):** 30.00. **EMD (in Rs):** 75000.00. |
| 7. | Removal of Silt, debris and Ward Maintenance Works in Ward No. 120 Bharathi Nagar for the Year 2025-26. **Estimate cost (Rs in Lakhs):** 30.00. **EMD (in Rs):** 75000.00. |
| | **CAT-I Category** |
| 8 | Removal of Silt, debris and Ward Maintenance Works in Ward No. 117 Vasanth Nagar for the Year 2025-26. **Estimate cost (Rs in Lakhs):** 30.00. **EMD (in Rs):** 37500.00. |
| | **CAT-IIA Category** |
| 9 | Removal of Silt, debris and Ward Maintenance Works in Ward No. 119 Shivaji Nagar for the Year 2025-26. **Estimate cost (Rs in Lakhs):** 30.00. **EMD (in Rs):** 37500.00. |
| | **S.C Category** |
| 10 | Filling up of Pot Holes in Ward No. 116 Ramaswamy Palya for the Year 2025-26. **Estimate cost (Rs in Lakhs):** 20.00. **EMD (in Rs):** 25000.00. |
| 11 | Removal of Silt, debris and Ward Maintenance Works in Ward No. 116 Ramaswamy Palya for the Year 2025-26. **Estimate cost (Rs in Lakhs):** 30.00. **EMD (in Rs):** 37500.00. |
| | **S.T Category** |
| 12 | Removal of Silt, debris and Ward Maintenance Works in Ward No. 121 Halasuru for the Year 2025-26. **Estimate cost (Rs in Lakhs):** 30.00. **EMD (in Rs):** 37500.00. |

**Calendar of Events: 1)** Pre bid meeting will be held on 12-12-2025 at 15.00. **2)** Last Date for uploading the Filled Tender Document is 16-12-2025 up to 16.00. **3)** Date of Technical bid opening of Tenders is on 18-12-2025 by 11.30. **4)** Date of Financial bid Opening of Tenders is on after Technical bid approved.

**Sd/- Executive Engineer, Shivaji Nagar Division**

CH CLASSIFIEDS
To place a classified ad contact: 080-41209042

## QUICK READ

### Woman succumbs to burns, 2 days after paramour's death

**Jaipur**

A woman, who was allegedly set on fire along with her partner by her family in Jaipur's Dudu area, has also succumbed to her burns. She was undergoing treatment at Jaipur's Sawai Man Singh (SMS) Hospital, where her boyfriend died on Monday night. The incident took place around 2 a.m. on November 28, when family members allegedly poured petrol on the couple and set them ablaze. The victims, identified as Kailash Gurjar (25) and Soni (30), residents of Barolav village in the Mokhampura area, were reportedly together on a farm platform when the attack occurred.

### NCBC drops 35 Bengal Muslim castes from Central OBC list

**Kolkata**

The decision of the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) to strike down 35 castes from West Bengal in the central Other Backward Classes list, all from the Muslim community, proves the appeasement politics pursued by the Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress government in the state, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) said on Wednesday. The information on the NCBC's move came through a reply given by Union Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment B. L. Verma to an unstarred question raised by Jagannath Sarkar, the BJP's Lok Sabha member from Ranaghat in Nadia district of West Bengal.

# Ex-Rajasthan min gets bail in ₹900 cr JJM scam

Major relief for senior Congress leader Mahesh Joshi, who has spent nearly seven months in Jaipur Central Jail.

**JAIPUR**

The Supreme Court on Wednesday granted bail to former Rajasthan Minister and senior Congress leader Mahesh Joshi, who has spent nearly seven months in Jaipur Central Jail in connection with the alleged ₹900-crore Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) scam.

Joshi was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on April 24 and has remained in custody since then, except for a brief four-day interim bail granted after the death of his wife on April 28.

A bench comprising Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice AG Masih delivered the bail order on December 3, nearly two weeks after reserving

judgment on November 21. Joshi approached the apex court after the Rajasthan High Court rejected his bail plea on August 26.

Appearing for Joshi, senior advocates Siddharth Luthra and Vivek Jain argued that despite being incarcerated for seven months, the trial has not yet commenced and the ED has failed to establish any conclusive evidence of bribery.

They highlighted the ED's claim that Joshi accepted ₹55 lakh as a bribe linked to a loan for his son's firm, noting that the amount was later returned. If this was a bribe, what was the reason for returning it? the counsel asked, asserting that the agency did not provide a satisfactory explanation.

Opposing the bail plea, the ED said Joshi's involvement was reflected in other FIRs filed by the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB). The agency argued that the ₹55 lakh transaction demonstrated his misconduct in the tendering process under the Jal Jeevan Mission and maintained that returning the money did not erase criminal intent. The ED further contended that Joshi could potentially influence witnesses if released.

# Modi government lauded for extensive support to farmers

**CHENNAI**

Tamil Nadu BJP unit President Nainar Nagenthran has expressed pride and gratitude for the continued support extended by the Union Government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi to farmers across the state. In a statement, he described the Centre's efforts as both heartening and historic, highlighting the scale and impact of welfare schemes delivered over the past several years.

Nagenthran said that since the Modi government began its third term in 2019, Tamil Nadu's farmers have collectively received ₹12,764 crore under the PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme. The initiative provides ₹6,000 annually as direct income support to every eligible farmer, a measure he said has become a crucial economic lifeline for countless agricultural households across the state.

**'Since the Modi government began its third term in 2019, TN farmers have collectively received ₹12,764 crore under the PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi'**

He also underscored major achievements under the Jal Jeevan Mission, noting that more than one crore rural households in Tamil Nadu have been provided free drinking water connections in the past six years. This milestone, he said, has quenched the thirst of millions and transformed rural living standards, marking a defining shift in the state's rural infrastructure.

Emphasising the Prime Minister's long-standing commitment to agriculture, Nagenthran said Narendra Modi believes that farming forms the true soul of any nation, sustaining livelihoods and feeding the world. He added that the Centre has taken every step necessary to strengthen the agricultural backbone of Tamil Nadu, from ensuring dignified income support to upgrading essential infrastructure in farming communities.

The BJP leader further praised the government's focus on long-term reforms beyond direct financial assistance. These include large-scale modernisation of irrigation networks, the promotion of micro-irrigation, increased procurement at Minimum Support Price (MSP), and expanded crop insurance coverage under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana.

## Torrential rains continue to batter coastal, interior TN

**CHENNAI**

Widespread rain continued to batter coastal Tamil Nadu and several interior districts on Wednesday as the depression over the Bay of Bengal further weakened into a well-marked low-pressure area.

For Chennai and its neighbouring districts Tiruvallur, Chengalpattu, and Kancheepuram -- the day brought yet another round of relentless showers. The downpour triggered sudden inundation across residential localities, arterial roads, and low-lying pockets, disrupting traffic and slowing down public movement.

Wednesday marked the third straight wet day of the week, which badly affected small traders and daily-wagers. Interior regions such as Villupuram, Cuddalore, and Tiruvannamalai also recorded repeated heavy spells with short intervals of relief as the weakened system advanced inland.

*The financial probe agency is expected to scrutinise suspected illicit money trails, shell companies and bank transactions linked to the alleged scam*

# ED steps up probe into multi-crore Jharkhand liquor scam

**RANCHI**

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has formally joined the probe into the multi-crore Jharkhand liquor scam, deepening what has become one of the most high-stakes corruption investigations in the state's recent history.

Acting on the FIR previously filed by the Jharkhand Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB), the ED has registered an Enforcement Case Information Report (ECIR No. 10/2025) under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

The agency has also secured approval from the special PMLA Court in Ranchi to interrogate and record statements of all accused persons who were arrested by the ACB earlier this year. With this development, the financial probe agency is expected to scrutinise suspected illicit

money trails, shell companies and bank transactions linked to the alleged scam.

The ACB had lodged its FIR in May after a preliminary investigation revealed deep-rooted irregularities in Jharkhand's liquor procurement, supply and distribution system. More than a dozen individuals, including senior bureaucrats, were named in the case. Among those arrested were IAS officer Vinay Kumar Chaubey, former IAS officer Amit Prakash, Jharkhand Administrative Service officer Gajendra Singh, businessman Siddharth Singhania from Chhattisgarh, and Vidhu Gupta, director of a private company. All accused were later granted bail after the ACB failed to file a charge sheet within the mandated timeframe.

So far, four IAS officers have already been questioned, with more expected to face scrutiny in the coming weeks.

Investigators allege that the state government had outsourced liquor shop operations and manpower supply to seven placement agencies that grossly violated tender norms. Several bank guarantees submitted during bidding were later found to be fake, raising suspicions of a coordinated conspiracy.

An internal audit conducted by the Jharkhand State Beverages Corporation Limited estimated that the state exchequer suffered losses amounting to ₹129.55 crore owing to widespread fraud, manipulation, and non-compliance in liquor operations.

# IMF's grading of India's data overlooks key points: Report

**NEW DELHI**

The International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Article IV annual assessment of India's economic framework released last week states that the country's strong economic performance has benefitted from sound macroeconomic policies and earlier structural reforms. It further states that despite external headwinds, growth is expected to remain resilient, with inflation remaining subdued.

However, oddly enough at the same time, it has given India's national accounts statistics, which includes key figures such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Gross Value Added (GVA), a C grade. Yet overall, across all data categories, India has received a sound B grade. There are four grades in total: A, B, C and D.

The IMF's criticism is focused on the methodology of India's statistical system, but does not question the authenticity of the data.

National accounts data are available at adequate frequency and timeliness and provide broadly adequate granularity. However, some methodological weaknesses somewhat hamper surveillance and warrant an overall sectoral rating for

the national accounts of C, the IMF stated.

It points to sizeable discrepancies between GDP estimates obtained from the production or income side and those obtained from the expenditure side, treating these gaps as evidence that household consumption and segments of the informal economy are not fully captured. It also highlights the limited use of seasonal adjustment and the scope for greater disaggregation of quarterly data.

For example, it highlighted an outdated base year of 2011-12 on which the data is based, and the use of wholesale price indices as data sources for deflators due to a lack of producer prices indices.

It points to sizeable discrepancies between GDP estimates obtained from the production or income side and those obtained from the expenditure side, treating these gaps as evidence that household consumption and segments of the informal economy are not fully captured.

# Tech glitch grounds 33 IndiGo flights in Hyderabad in two days

**HYDERABAD**

Flight operations at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport in Hyderabad suffered disruptions as 33 flights of IndiGo have been cancelled, inconveniencing passengers.

At least 16 departures and 17 arrivals have been cancelled on Tuesday and Wednesday. According to airport sources, nine departures and five arrivals were cancelled.

Seven departures and 12 arrivals were also cancelled on December 3 (Wednesday). The cancellations on key domestic routes caused inconvenience to hundreds of passengers.

Sources attributed the cancellations to the airline's operational issues. No detailed explanation has been issued.

Arrivals from Visakhapatnam, Goa, Ahmedabad, Delhi, Bengaluru, Chennai, Madurai, Hubbali, Bhopal and Bhubaneswar were cancelled on Wednesday.

Departures to destinations like Delhi, Bengaluru, Bhubaneswar, Hubbali and Bhopal were also cancelled. Earlier on Tuesday, flights from Raipur, Coimbatore, Udaipur, Ahmedabad and Goa were cancelled. Similarly, departures to Ahmedabad, Coimbatore, Raipur, Udaipur, Goa, Calcutta and Visakhapatnam were also cancelled.

Nine flights to destinations like Delhi, Bengaluru, Calcutta, Goa, Mumbai and Ahmedabad were also delayed on Tuesday. The cancellations and delays led to several passengers getting stranded at the airport. Passengers travelling to key domestic destinations to take connecting international flights were the worst affected.

Ayappa devotees also suffered due to flight cancellations and delays. Devotees who had booked tickets for the Hyderabad-Kochi IndiGo flight were stranded due to the delay. One of the devotees said there was no response from the airline staff to their queries for a refund. The devotees said the delay has disrupted their plans as they had booked tickets for 'darshan' at Sabrimala.

# Telangana CM meets PM, extends invitation for Global Summit

**HYDERABAD**

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Wednesday met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi to invite him to the 'Telangana Rising 2047 Global Summit' scheduled to be held in Hyderabad next week and to seeks the Centre's support for key infrastructure projects.

During the meeting, the CM extended a special invitation to the Prime Minister to attend the Global Summit to be held at the Bharat Future City, Hyderabad on December 8 and 9. He explained that, in alignment with the Union Government's 'Viksit Bharat 2047' goals, Telangana is moving ahead with a strong vision to achieve a $3-trillion economy by 2047. In line with these goals, Telangana has prepared the Telangana Rising 2047 Vision Document, designed to analyse sector-wise growth targets and future development plans.

He urged the PM to grant necessary approvals for Phase-II expansion of the Hyderabad Metro Rail. The state government has already submitted proposals to the Centre for a network expansion covering 162.5 km, with an estimated cost of ₹43,848 crore.

# Bank's liability ends after payment to surviving account holder: J&K HC

**SRINAGAR**

The J&K and Ladakh High Court ruled on Wednesday that once a bank pays the balance of a joint account with 'either or survivor' mandate to the surviving account holder, the bank is fully discharged of its liability.

Justice Sanjay Dhar of the High Court said in his order, a bank is fully discharged of liability when it pays the balance of a joint account with an 'either or survivor' mandate to the surviving account holder.

Any subsequent dispute between the survivor and the deceased's legal heirs is a matter for them to resolve civilly, and the bank cannot be held criminally liable for honouring the 'either or survivor' clause.

The High Court further said that other court rulings, such as those from the Madras High Court, also support that the right to operate the account passes to the survivor upon the death of one account holder.

The order said that the bank's duty is to release funds

to the surviving account holder as per the either or survivor instruction.

Paying the surviving holder is a complete and valid discharge of the bank's obligation. Any dispute over the entitlement to the funds, after the survivor has received them, is a matter between the survivor and the legal heirs. This is a civil matter and not a basis for criminal proceedings against the bank. 'Either or survivor' mandate is a contract between the account holders and the bank. By signing for this clause, the account holders agree that the bank is entitled to pay the balance to whichever of the two is alive, the order mentioned. The principle that the right to operate the account passes to the survivor is supported by other High Court judgments in India.

**RS ZERO HOUR**

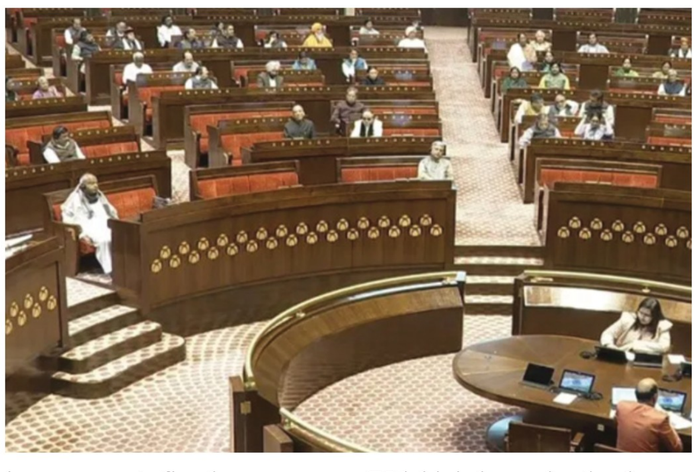
# *Cong MP wants deposit insurance hiked to ₹25 lakh*

**NEW DELHI**

During Zero Hour in the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday, Congress MP Neeraj Dangi sharply criticised the current ₹5 lakh deposit insurance cover provided by the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC), calling it grossly inadequate in today's financial landscape.

He urged the government to immediately raise the limit to at least ₹25 lakh per depositor to safeguard millions of citizens—particularly senior citizens whose life savings often remain at risk.

Dangi highlighted that under existing norms, every category of bank deposit—savings, current, fixed, or recurring—is insured only up to ₹5 lakh if a commercial or cooperative bank collapses. The entire risk of amounts above



₹5 lakh is borne by the depositor alone, he said, adding that the current limit, revised in February 2020 following the Punjab and Maharashtra Co-operative Bank (PMC Bank) crisis, had previously remained at just ₹1 lakh for decades.

Quoting the DICGC's March 2024 report, he pointed out that out of 1,497 insured banks nationwide, only 43.8% of the total deposits are fully covered under the present limit. A shocking 56.2% of the total deposit amount remains completely uninsured, he said.

The bulk of this uninsured money, he warned, belongs to senior citizens who rely on bank deposits for financial security. If even one major urban cooperative or small finance bank fails, the hard-earned money of thousands of senior citizens could vanish overnight, Dangi cautioned.

He noted that in just the past year (2023–24), 431 urban cooperative banks have either collapsed or come under severe financial stress. Referring to the PMC Bank crisis, he said the DICGC had to disburse nearly ₹17,000 crore to affected depositors.

Dangi insisted that the deposit insurance premium, currently 0.12 per cent and paid by banks, must continue to be borne entirely by them without being transferred to customers. Raising the insurance limit, he argued, would restore greater trust in the banking system.

## QUICK READ

### Bihar govt tables Rs 91,000-cr supplementary budget

**Patna**

The third day of the Bihar Legislative Assembly session on Wednesday emerged as a vivid blend of political turbulence, constitutional propriety and parliamentary tradition. The state government reaffirmed its commitment to development by presenting a substantial second supplementary Budget of Rs 91,717.135 crore in both Houses of the Bihar legislature. Finance Minister Bijendra Prasad Yadav tabled the Budget in the Assembly, while in the Legislative Council, Minister-in-Charge Dilip Jaiswal took responsibility. The sizeable allocation is being viewed as a significant step towards accelerating welfare schemes, clearing pending infrastructure projects and strengthening financial discipline across key sectors.

### Woman attacked amid chaos at MP fertiliser distribution centre

**Khajuraho**

A video surfaced on social media showing a Naib Tehsildar repeatedly slapping a young woman at a fertiliser distribution centre in Madhya Pradesh's Chhatarpur, sparking outrage and a controversy on Wednesday. Chhatarpur District Collector Parth Jaiswal on Wednesday issued a show-cause notice to Naib Tehsildar Ritu Singhai and sought an explanation in the matter within 24 hours. A short video clip of the incident went viral showing Naib Tehsildar Ritu Singhai repeatedly slapping a woman, who had come to receive a token for fertiliser. Ritu Singhai could also be heard shouting as the situation was out of control and people present there had to intervene to save the young woman from Ritu Singhai's wrath who even lunged to grab the girl's hair.

### Job scam: 'Publish list of 'untainted' non-teaching staff'

**Kolkata**

The Calcutta High Court on Wednesday directed the West Bengal School Service Commission (WBSSC) to publish the list of untainted non-teaching staff in Group-C and Group-D categories in its 2016 panel, which was cancelled entirely following a Supreme Court order in April this year. Directing the WBSSC to publish the list by Thursday, a single-judge bench of Justice Amrita Sinha observed that the publication of the list of untainted non-teaching staff was necessary to provide room for them to participate in the fresh recruitment process and also enjoy the necessary age relaxation for the purpose.

# Commitment to dignity, inclusion for persons with disabilities: PM

'Persons with disabilities have excelled across various sectors through their creativity and determination, significantly enriching India's progress'

**NEW DELHI**

On the occasion of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on Wednesday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi reaffirmed the Centre's commitment to ensuring dignity, accessibility and opportunity for the nation's 'Divyang' population.

The day, observed annually on December 3, was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1992 to promote understanding of disability issues and support the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities.

In a message shared on X, PM Modi said, On the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, we reiterate our commitment to always ensuring dignity, access and opportunity for our Divyang sisters and brothers. He added that persons with disabilities have excelled across various sectors through their creativity and determination, significantly enriching India's progress.

The Prime Minister also emphasised the government's continuous efforts toward disability welfare, noting advancements in legislation, accessible infrastructure, inclusive education and innovations in assistive technologies. We will continue to do more in the times to come, he said.

The global observance aims to raise awareness about disability inclusion and ensure full participation of persons with disabilities in political, social, economic and cultural spheres. It underscores the need to create societies where individuals with disabilities can contribute equally and meaningfully.

Meanwhile, President Droupadi Murmu presented the National Awards for the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities for 2025 at a ceremony in New Delhi. Addressing the gathering, she stressed that equality for Divyang citizens is essential for genuine national progress. Divyangjan deserve equality. Ensuring their equal participation in the developmental journey of society and the country is the duty of all stakeholders, rather than a matter of charity, she said. According to the President, a society can be considered truly developed only when persons with disabilities participate on equal footing with all citizens.

Governor of Kerala Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar and Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan receive President Droupadi Murmu on her arrival in Thiruvananthapuram on Wednesday

# Prez joins historic Kerala Navy Day event with warships, aircraft display

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM**

Thiruvananthapuram: President Droupadi Murmu, the Supreme Commander of the Indian Armed Forces, arrived in Kerala's capital on Wednesday to attend Navy Day celebrations being hosted in the state for the first time.

She was given a ceremonial reception at the airport, where Governor Rajendra V Arlekar, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and other senior dignitaries received her. Soon after, the President inspected a ceremonial guard of honour before proceeding to the city for the evening's events at Shankhumukham Beach, which has been transformed into a grand venue for the naval showcase.

Navy Day commemorates the Indian Navy's audacious and successful 1971 attack on Karachi harbour during the Indo-Pak war—an operation that stands as a defining moment in India's maritime history.

This year's celebrations promise to be among the most elaborate public demonstrations of naval capability. A total of 19 warships, a submarine, four fast-interceptor craft and 32 naval aircraft—including fighter jets and helicopters—are set to participate. The event is open to the public, offering citizens a rare opportunity to witness the Navy's prowess up close.

According to a Navy communique, the event will open with a dramatic salute by an MH-60R helicopter, performing a low-altitude nose dip as a tribute to President Murmu. This will be followed by a coordinated 'W' manoeuvre by frontline warships and banner formations by Chetak helicopters.

Special forces units will showcase 'visit, board, search and seizure' operations, while other highlights include a simulated missile launch from warships, a submarine sail-past, high-speed runs by interceptor craft, water-jet fast attack demonstrations and simulated MiG-29K launch and recovery operations from an aircraft carrier.

The aerial segment will feature combat manoeuvres by Hawk AJT aircraft, helicopter deck landings on moving ships, composite fly-pasts and anti-submarine rocket firing.

## 41 years of Bhopal Gas tragedy: Clash erupts during candle march

**BHOPAL**

A peaceful march to observe the 41st anniversary of the Bhopal Gas Tragedy turned into a clash over burning effigies of the ruling BJP in the state capital on Wednesday. Like every year, a group of survivors of the Bhopal Gas Tragedy was holding a candle march in the JP Nagar area, where the defunct Union Carbide factory is located, and most of the survivors reside.

As the march was underway, proceeding on a road outside the boundary wall of the Union Carbide plant, someone tried to burn the effigies of the BJP in a show of aggression against the government.

However, the act wasn't received well by the local BJP and some other right-wing activists, which eventually turned into a clash. Tension escalated when the protesters carried an effigy symbolising Union Carbide, Dow, and companies linked to the 1984 disaster.

BJP workers alleged that the effigy portrayed an RSS worker. They accused the organisers of hurting religious and organisational sentiments.

Gas victims' organisations rejected the allegations, stating the effigy represented the corporations responsible for the tragedy, not any group or organisation. They accused the BJP government of protecting Dow Chemical and obstructing efforts to hold the guilty companies accountable.

As arguments intensified, police stepped in and seized the effigy to prevent further escalation

## Sresan Pharma cough syrup case: ED attaches properties worth Rs 2.04 cr

*Continued from page 1*

**CHENNAI**

The Directorate of Enforcement (ED), Chennai Zonal Office, has provisionally attached immovable properties worth Rs 2.04 crore belonging to G Ranganathan, proprietor of M/s Sresan Pharmaceutical Manufacturer, in connection with the money laundering probe into the adulterated cough syrup tragedy that led to the deaths of more than 20 children.

The attachment, made on December 2 under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), covers two residential flats in Kodambakkam, Chennai, owned by Ranganathan and his family members. The ED action originates from two FIRs that

triggered the money laundering investigation.

The Madhya Pradesh Police registered the first FIR against Ranganathan for manufacturing and selling the adulterated Coldrif cough syrup that caused multiple deaths.

The case was booked under Section 105 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (corresponding to Section 304 IPC).

Investigations found that the cough syrup, manufactured at Sresan Pharma's Chennai unit, contained dangerously high concentrations of toxic chemicals - Diethylene Glycol (DEG) at 48.6 per cent w/v and Ethylene Glycol (EG) at 46.28 per cent w/v. These chemicals, when consumed, can cause acute renal failure, and laboratory results confirmed that they were present far beyond safe limits.

More than 20 children in Madhya Pradesh died after consuming the contaminated syrup, while several others suffered severe kidney damage. Investigators have concluded that negligent and adulterated manufacturing practices adopted by Sresan Pharma directly contributed to the poisoning.

The second FIR, registered by the Chennai Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB), is against P.U. Karthigeyan, Director (incharge) and Joint Director of the Tamil Nadu Drugs Control Department, under Section 7 of the Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Act, 2018.

## Jharkhand HC rejects plea for CBI probe into JSSC-CGL paper leak

**RANCHI**

The Jharkhand High Court on Wednesday dismissed a petition seeking a CBI investigation into the alleged paper leak in the Jharkhand Staff Selection Commission's Combined Graduate Level (JSSC-CGL) examination. This has now cleared the way for the long-delayed results to be published.

A division bench of Chief Justice Tarlok Singh Chauhan and Justice Rajesh Shankar pronounced the verdict on Wednesday, nearly a month after they reserved judgment on November 3. The court directed the Commission to publish the pending results without further delay.

During previous hearings, Advocate General Rajiv Ranjan and Advocate Piyush Chitresh represented the state government, while Advocate Sanjay Piparwal appeared for the JSSC. Senior Supreme Court advocate Ajit Kumar Sinha and senior High Court advocate Ajit Kumar represented the petitioners.

The highly competitive JSSC-CGL examination -- conducted for recruitment to more than 2,000 state government posts -- was held on September 21 and 22, 2024, across 823 examination centres. Out of 3,04,769 candidates who appeared, the Commission shortlisted 2,145 candidates on December 5, 2024.

However, the declaration of results was halted after Rajesh Kumar and others filed a PIL demanding a CBI probe, alleging the exam had been compromised through leaked question papers. Taking note of the allegations, the HC imposed an interim stay on the release of results on December 17, 2024. After several hearings, the state government informed the bench that the CID had found no substantial evidence to support claims.

*The government had earlier announced a longer session, from December 8 to 19, but now it will run till December 14.*

## Maha winter session cut short amid local body poll preparations

**MUMBAI**

Amid the ongoing local body election process, the winter session of the Maharashtra Legislature will now be held from December 8 to 14 in Nagpur.

The decision was finalised on Wednesday during meetings of the Business Advisory Committee (BAC) of both the state Assembly and the Legislative Council at Vidhan Bhavan.

The government had earlier announced a longer session, from December 8 to 19, when both Houses were prorogued following the conclusion of the monsoon session in July. However, the schedule has been shortened due to the second phase of the Nagar Parishad and Nagar Panchayat

polls slated for December 20, with counting scheduled for December 21.

The BAC meeting of the Assembly was chaired by Speaker Rahul Narwekar, while Council Chairman Ram Shinde presided over the upper house's committee discussions.

Opposition parties, including Shiv Sena (UBT), Congress and NCP (SP), strongly objected to the curtailed duration. They demanded that the winter session should run for at least three weeks to allow adequate discussion on key issues. The opposition also reiterated its demand for the immediate appointment of the Leaders of the Opposition in both Houses—posts that have remained vacant despite repeated calls.

Shiv Sena (UBT) legislator Anil Parab confirmed that he, along with Congress MLA Satej Patil, met Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis to press for the appointments. Calling the delay unconstitutional, Parab said, It is unconstitutional to hold the winter session of the state legislature in the absence of the leaders of the opposition.

According to Parab, the Chief Minister assured them that the government would consider the matter positively, though no formal timeline has been announced.

**WOMEN IN CAPFS**

## *With 3,239 recruitments in 2024-25, Centre sets 5,171 target for next year*

**NEW DELHI**

A total of 3,239 women were recruited across the four Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) in FY 2024-25. The CRPF recruited 294 women, BSF 1,680, ITBP 1,093, and SSB 172, the Centre stated in the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday.

The Central government has reaffirmed its commitment to enhancing women's participation across CAPFs, outlining recruitment figures, future targets, and ongoing measures to create safer and more gender-sensitive work environments for women personnel.

Notably, the government has set a more ambitious target of recruiting 5,171 women personnel in FY 2025-26, with the CRPF alone aiming

to induct 1,192 women constables next year. The BSF has set a target of 2,513, followed by ITBP with 1,375 and SSB with 91.

The details were shared in a written reply by Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai in the Rajya Sabha while replying to a question from MP Kartikeya Sharma.

Responding to a question on whether the Centre plans to increase the strength of women personnel in the CRPF, BSF, ITBP and SSB with a view to creating dedicated women wings, MoS Rai recalled that the government had in January 2016 decided to reserve 33 per cent of constable posts for women in the CRPF, and 14-15 per cent at the constable level in BSF, SSB and ITBP.

Rai emphasised that the government is taking every step and effort to ensure safe working conditions and gender-sensitive operational protocols for women across forces.

They are being provided separate accommodation/barracks, rest room-cum-changing room and separate toilets. Creches and Day Care Centres have also been provided to take care of their children. There is also provision for women-centric medical support to address women-specific health issues, Women Help Desks and confidential complaint mechanisms to address grievances related to sexual harassment, the MoS noted in his reply.

## GARC report recommends faster, transparent, tech-driven recruitment

**AHMEDABAD**

The Gujarat Administrative Reforms Commission (GARC) on Wednesday submitted its sixth report to Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, outlining a series of youth-focused reforms aimed at strengthening their role as the driving force behind the state's 'Viksit Gujarat' mission.

The commission, headed by Principal Advisor Dr. Hasmukh Adhia, was constituted to streamline and modernise the administrative framework of the state government. With five reports already submitted earlier, the latest document marks another significant step toward administrative efficiency and youth empowerment. The sixth report presents nine key recommendations designed to make government recruitment faster, more transparent, technology-driven and aligned with the aspirations of young jobseekers.

Among the major proposals is the introduction of a fixed timeline for recruitment, ensuring that three-stage processes are completed within 9 to 12 months, and two-stage recruitments within 6 to 9 months. The commission also aims to further shorten these timelines over time to minimise delays and uncertainty for candidates. Another crucial recommendation is the implementation of Joint Recruitment and a Common Entrance Test (CET) for cadres requiring similar educational qualifications. By conducting joint prelims and subject-wise mains examinations, the state aims to reduce administrative burden.

## QUICK READ

### S Korea's Defence chief urges military to defend constitutional values

**Seoul**
South Korea's Defence Minister Ahn Gyu-back on Wednesday presided over a meeting of key commanders and urged the military to strive to defend constitutional values, a year after the failed martial law bid that involved the former defence minister and a slew of military top brass. The meeting comes a day after Ahn issued an apology over the military's involvement in former President Yoon Suk Yeol's short-lived martial law bid on December 3 last year, when troops were deployed to the National Assembly to block lawmakers from voting down the decree.

### Indian envoy hosts farewell reception for US Ambassador

**Washington**
Indian envoy to the US, Vinay Mohan Kwatra, hosted a farewell reception for US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor at India House and extended him wishes for his assignment in New Delhi. Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and US Senator Jim Risch, and Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and US Representative Brian Mast were present on the occasion. In a post on X, Kwatra stated, Honoured to host a farewell reception for Ambassador Sergio Gor at India House tonight. Wished him well for his assignment in New Delhi.

### Bangladesh ACC defends verdict against UK MP

**Dhaka**
Bangladesh's Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) claimed that it had thoroughly reviewed all prosecution materials in the case against UK MP Tulip Siddiq, filed by the anti-graft body amid concerns raised in recent media reports about her trial and sentencing. The ACC's clarification came after a Dhaka court sentenced former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to five years in prison over irregularities in the allocation of plots under the Purbachal New Town project. Additionally, Hasina's sister, Sheikh Rehana, was handed a seven-year sentence, while her niece, Tulip Siddiq, received two years' imprisonment.

# B'desh Primary Schools Shut Down as Teachers Launch Strike

Bangladesh's government primary school teachers launched a nationwide shutdown Wednesday demanding urgent action on pay and promotion reforms

**DHAKA**

Government primary schools across Bangladesh came to a standstill on Wednesday as teachers enforced a complete shutdown to press for a three-point charter of demands, according to local media reports. The move marks an escalation in ongoing protests that began last week, with educators declaring they will not return to classrooms or participate in examinations until concrete action is taken.

The strike is being led by the Primary Teachers' Demand Implementation Council, which announced the nationwide closure. The group said the decision was forced by the lack of progress despite repeated assurances from the Finance Ministry under the Muhammad Yunus-led interim government.

The Finance Ministry promised to meet our three-point demand, but no tangible action has been taken. As a result, all government primary schools will remain closed from Wednesday, and examinations will be boycotted until our demands are met, the council told The Dhaka Tribune.

Teachers say the shutdown reflects deep frustration over long-pending issues that directly affect their livelihoods and career growth. Their demands include upgrading the pay scale of assistant teachers to grade 10, resolving complexities related to higher grade benefits after 10 and 16 years of service, and ensuring 100 per cent departmental promotions from assistant teacher to head teacher.

In a social media post Wednesday morning, platform leader Mohammad Shamsuddin reiterated that the complete shutdown or locked-school programme will continue until the demands are implemented.

Teachers had already staged a three-day work stoppage last week, but union leaders say the interim government showed no visible progress throughout November. The situation intensified earlier this month after clashes with police reportedly left one teacher dead and several others injured.

# NDRF Rescues 2 in SL as India Expands Humanitarian Efforts

**India's NDRF teams evacuated two vulnerable Sri Lankan citizens amid severe flooding and destruction caused by Cyclone Ditwah**

**COLOMBO**

India's ongoing humanitarian mission in Sri Lanka, Operation Sagar Bandhu, continued to save lives on Wednesday as National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) personnel evacuated a visually challenged senior citizen and an injured woman from Sedawatta and Nadeegama. The rescue was carried out in the aftermath of Cyclone Ditwah, which unleashed torrential rains, flash floods and landslides across the island nation, causing extensive destruction and loss of life.

In a statement posted on X, the Indian High Commission in Sri Lanka said, Under Operation Sagar Bandhu, NDRF teams continued life-saving efforts. NDRF helped a visually challenged senior citizen and an injured woman in Sedawatta and Nadeegama, both safely evacuated with onsite medical care.

India launched Operation Sagar Bandhu on November 28 to provide urgent search and rescue support as well as Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) to Sri Lanka. The operation comes in response to widespread flooding, severe infrastructural damage and disruptions triggered by Cyclone Ditwah.

As part of the mission, Indian Naval Ship (INS) Vikrant and INS Udaygiri have been deployed to Colombo, where they delivered emergency relief materials to affected communities. In addition, ship-borne helicopters have been conducting aerial reconnaissance of devastated areas to enhance search and rescue operations and assess the situation on the ground.

According to the Indian Navy, these airborne efforts have significantly boosted ongoing rescue missions. In the aftermath of Cyclone Ditwah, INS Vikrant and INS Udaygiri at Colombo delivered immediate assistance by providing relief provisions at short notice. Ship-borne helicopters were deployed for aerial recce of the affected areas and augmented ongoing Search and Rescue efforts, leading to successful rescue of Sri Lankan citizens, the Navy's spokesperson posted on X. With several regions still submerged and recovery operations underway, India's assistance continues to play a crucial role in supporting Sri Lanka during one of its most challenging natural disasters in recent years.

## 'Securing US consent for nuclear-powered subs major achievement'

**SEOUL**

South Korean President Lee Jae Myung said Wednesday that securing U.S. approval for nuclear-powered submarines was the most significant outcome of his two recent summit meetings with U.S. President Donald Trump. Speaking at a press conference with foreign media, Lee expressed hope that the submarines could be built in South Korea rather than in the United States, citing economic benefits and national security considerations.

"It was a highly beneficial outcome for us in terms of strategic flexibility and autonomy," Lee said. He added that although Trump suggested building the vessels at the Philadelphia shipyard, doing so would be "realistically very difficult" from Seoul's perspective.

Following their meeting in Gyeongju during the APEC forum, Trump said he had approved Seoul's request for nuclear-powered submarines and indicated they would be constructed at the Philadelphia shipyard operated by South Korea's Hanwha Ocean. Lee, however, said domestic production would be more desirable for both military and economic reasons.

He strongly rejected concerns that pursuing nuclear submarines would undermine the international non-proliferation regime, insisting that South Korea fully upholds its obligations. Nuclear submarines, he noted, do not carry detonators or nuclear weapons, and spent-fuel reprocessing does not equate to proliferation.

## Trump to Announce Federal Reserve Chair Pick

**NEW YORK**

U.S. President Donald Trump said he plans to announce his nominee for the next Federal Reserve chair in early 2026. Speaking during a cabinet meeting at the White House, Trump briefly addressed questions about the upcoming leadership transition at the central bank, noting, "We'll be announcing somebody, probably early next year, for the new chairman of the Fed." Though he has hinted that he has already made his choice, no formal confirmation has been given.

National Economic Council Director Kevin Hassett is widely seen as the top contender to replace current Fed Chair Jerome Powell, whose term expires in May 2026. Hassett, a veteran economic adviser in Republican administrations, has played a key role in shaping the White House's fiscal and monetary strategies.

Since returning to office in January, Trump has frequently criticised Powell for allegedly being too slow to cut interest rates despite easing inflation and weakening growth. He has also raised the possibility of removing Powell—an action economists warn could erode the Fed's independence. Legal experts, however, argue that a president cannot dismiss a Fed chair over policy disagreements.

*A man was killed and two others injured after a shooting in eastern Australia, prompting a major police search*

# 1 Dead, 2 Hospitalised After Shooting in Eastern Australia

**SYDNEY**

A man died and two others were hospitalised after a shooting at a property in eastern Australia's New South Wales (NSW) on Wednesday afternoon. Police said emergency services were alerted to the incident in the small town of Eungella, over 640 km northeast of Sydney near the Queensland border at around 1:25 pm local time.

Responding officers were informed that two men, aged 38 and 41, had been shot by another man who fled the scene with a fourth individual. The 41-year-old victim received treatment from ambulance paramedics but died at the scene. The 38-year-old sustained a gunshot wound and sought medical attention at a nearby hospital.

Shortly after, emergency services were called to a second incident in the vicinity, where a 45-year-old man was struck by a car. He was transported to hospital under police guard. Authorities are attempting to determine how both hospitalised men were injured and whether the two incidents are connected.

NSW Police said they are working to locate a fourth man, believed to be 37 years old, who may have information crucial to the investigation. Officers are awaiting the opportunity to interview the injured men to clarify the sequence of events.

The Eungella shooting follows another fatal incident in the region late last month. On November 28, a man died after being shot multiple times on a street in Blacktown, located 30 kilometres west of central Sydney. Police were called around 11:50 am after reports of a public place shooting and found the victim with gunshot wounds to the neck, chest and leg. He was treated by paramedics but succumbed to his injuries.

## SU DO KU

**Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?**

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Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

**Fill a 9×9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3×3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9.**

**AFGHAN REFUGEES REPATRIATED**

# *Over 5,000 Afghan Refugees Forcibly Repatriated from Pak and Iran in a Single Day*

**KABUL**

Over 5,000 Afghan refugees were forcibly repatriated from Pakistan and Iran in a single day, Afghanistan's Taliban authorities confirmed on Wednesday. According to local media reports, the mass return marks one of the largest single-day expulsions in recent months, reflecting escalating pressure on Afghan migrants living in neighbouring countries.

Taliban deputy spokesman Hamdullah Fitrat, sharing data from the High Commission for Addressing Migrants' Issues on X, said that 689 families — a total of 5,496 individuals returned to Afghanistan. The refugees entered the country through multiple border crossings, including Bahramcha in Helmand, Torkham in Nangarhar, Islam Qala in Herat, Pul-i-Abresham in Nimroz and Spin Boldak in Kandahar.

Fitrat added that 856 returning families, comprising 4,800 people, were relocated to their respective provinces, while 563 families received humanitarian support. Telecommunication companies also stepped in to provide assistance to the returnees.

The latest figures follow another wave of forced returns earlier in the week. Fitrat said that 3,164 Afghan refugees were expelled from Pakistan and Iran on Monday alone, bringing the two-day total to over 8,600.

The surge in repatriations comes against the backdrop of Pakistan's sweeping crackdown on undocumented Afghan migrants. In November, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that Pakistan detained a record number of Afghans in 2025, with the highest arrests recorded in Balochistan and Punjab.

According to UNHCR data cited by Khaama Press, Pakistani authorities detained 100,971 Afghans between January 1 and mid-November 2025 — a dramatic spike compared with about 9,000 arrests in 2024 and 26,000 in 2023. The report noted that 76 per cent of those detained were either undocumented migrants or Afghan Citizen Card holders, while 24 per cent possessed Proof of Registration (PoR) cards.

Humanitarian organisations have urged Pakistan to ensure that all returns are voluntary and carried out in line with international law. They warn that mass expulsions are fueling instability along Afghanistan's borders, where thousands of newly returned families face shortages of shelter, jobs and essential services.

## IED blast kills 3 police personnel in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

**ISLAMABAD**

Three police personnel, including an assistant sub-inspector, were killed on Wednesday when an improvised explosive device targeted a police vehicle in the Paniyala area of Dera Ismail Khan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The victims were ASI Gul Alam, Constable Rafiq and driver Sakhi Jan, while another constable survived unhurt. Security forces cordoned off the area and launched a search operation. In a separate attack, the convoy of North Waziristan Assistant Commissioner Shah Wali Khan was ambushed on the Bannu–Miranshah Road near Masoomabad Mamandkhel. Khan and three others died, while three members of his security team were injured. Pakistan has seen rising militancy since the TTP ended its ceasefire in 2022.

## QUICK READ

### Vishal Fabrics wins Rs 100 crore export deal

**New Delhi**

Vishal Fabrics has secured a major export order worth Rs 100 crore for supplying premium denim fabric to six countries, including South Africa and Nigeria. The Ahmedabad-based company received the order from Kiran Enterprises, with shipments scheduled to begin on January 15, 2026. The deal covers a wide range of high-quality denim to be delivered to key markets such as Nigeria, Egypt, South Africa, Turkey, Morocco, and Lesotho. Company officials said the partnership will strengthen its global presence and boost India's textile exports. Vishal Fabrics aims to meet rising global demand with upgraded production capacity.

### Imported car sales surge in South Korea

**Seoul**

Sales of imported cars in South Korea rose 23% in November, driven by strong demand for Tesla and German brands, according to KAIDA data. New registrations reached 29,357 units, up from 23,784 last year. Tesla led the market, with Model Y variants topping the sales chart, and its overall sales more than doubling to 7,632 units. Hybrids made up 51% of sales, followed by EVs at 37%. From January to November, imported car sales grew 16.3% to 278,769 units. Meanwhile, regulators criticised e-commerce giant Coupang for failing to properly notify customers of a major data leak.

# New labour codes promise fair, inclusive workforce: Mandaviya

Mandaviya noted India's social protection gains, with 64% covered, and urged structured skill mapping for rising global demand

**NEW DELHI**

The Union Labour and Employment Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said the new Labour Codes, expected to be notified soon, will help build a fair, strong and more inclusive workforce across the country. Speaking at a CII event on labour reforms for Viksit Bharat, he said the government has begun the process of enforcing the rules and will publish draft rules for all four Labour Codes shortly.

The government recently notified the Code on Wages, 2019, the Industrial Relations Code, 2020, the Code on Social Security, 2020 and the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020. Mandaviya said the working class is the backbone of the nation, and the new codes aim to strengthen their welfare and social security.

He explained that the reforms are not just about merging old labour laws but about giving dignity, respect and better protection to workers. The new system includes annual health check-ups, stronger safety rules and ensures that workers who have completed one year of service are eligible for gratuity. He added that gig workers and platform workers have also been brought under the social security net.

Mandaviya said India has made strong progress in social protection. As per the ILO, around 64% of citizens now receive at least one form of social security. He highlighted the growing demand for skilled Indian workers abroad and stressed the need to map and develop skills in a structured way.

CII President Rajiv Memani welcomed the reforms, saying the new Labour Codes will boost investment, ease of doing business and India's global competitiveness.

# INDIA ADVANCES SMR DEVPT WITH NEW REACTOR DESIGNS

**Jitendra Singh said India and Russia's Rosatom discussed expanding nuclear cooperation, including large and small plants, fuel-cycle work, equipment manufacturing, and exploring Russian-designed SMRs for deployment**

**NEW DELHI**

The government told Parliament that the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) has begun designing and developing new small modular reactors (SMRs). These include the 200 MWe Bharat Small Modular Reactor (BSMR-200), the 55 MWe SMR-55 and a small high-temperature gas-cooled reactor of up to 5 MWth meant for hydrogen production.

Union Minister Jitendra Singh said the first units will be built at Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) sites for technology demonstration. Once the projects are approved, the reactors are expected to be completed in about 60 to 72 months.

He also informed that India and Russia's Rosatom recently held discussions to strengthen cooperation in nuclear energy. The talks covered the development of both large and small nuclear plants, nuclear fuel-cycle cooperation and options to manufacture equipment within India. One of the new ideas discussed was building Russian-designed SMRs in the country.

On Bharat Small Reactors for industrial use, the minister said NPCIL issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) on December 31, 2024. A pre-proposal meeting was held in February 2025 to answer industry queries. All clarifications have been posted on the NPCIL website, and the RFP deadline has been extended to March 31, 2026.

He added that the draft Atomic Energy Bill 2025 is in the final stages of preparation, with suggestions from ministries being incorporated and legal review underway.

The Budget 2025–26 announcement for the Nuclear Energy Mission aims to develop and deploy five indigenous SMRs by 2033, with a total outlay of ₹20,000 crore.

*The rupee's recent slide isn't harmful, the CEA said, expecting recovery next year as global conditions stabilize ahead*

# Rupee decline seen as manageable by top economist Nageswaran

**NEW DELHI**

India's Chief Economic Advisor V. Anantha Nageswaran said there is no major worry despite the rupee falling past 90 against the US dollar. Speaking at a business summit, he said the currency's drop has not badly affected inflation or exports. He added that he is not losing sleep over the situation, as the economy has not shown signs of stress from the recent depreciation.

The rupee has weakened about four to five per cent since April because of a strong US dollar, mixed foreign investments, and steady demand from importers. On Wednesday, it opened at a new low due to continued equity outflows and uncertainty surrounding India-US trade talks. Even so, the Chief Economic Advisor said the timing of this fall is not harmful. He noted that if the currency needs to weaken, this period is better than others. He also expects the rupee to recover next year as global financial conditions become more stable.

The Reserve Bank of India has allowed the rupee to move with market forces and steps in only to prevent sharp swings. The central bank does not follow a fixed exchange rate. The Monetary Policy Committee, meeting ahead of its rate decision on December 5, is expected to keep its main focus on inflation. It has also stressed the importance of a flexible currency to help absorb global shocks.

Experts say the rupee's fall is similar to the trend seen in other Asian currencies facing pressure from high US interest rates and cautious global investors. India's steady growth outlook has helped limit the fall compared to some neighbouring countries. Nageswaran also joined a session on building a stronger economic base, where speakers discussed fiscal discipline, more privatisation, and better statistical systems. They explained how these steps can help the country handle global challenges and support long-term growth.

## Unit-2 of Subansiri hydro proj to begin this month

**NEW DELHI**

NHPC announced that the 250 MW Unit-2 of the Subansiri Lower hydro project will begin commercial power supply this month. The state-run hydropower company confirmed in a regulatory filing that the unit was successfully test-synchronised with the national grid on December 2. The project, with a total planned capacity of 2,000 MW, is one of India's major hydro developments. NHPC stated that the Commercial Operation Date for Unit-2 is expected within December 2025. The milestone marks another step toward boosting clean energy generation and strengthening the country's power supply.

## Rising incomes make homes more affordable: Colliers India

**NEW DELHI**

A new report shows that rising incomes in India have made buying a home far more affordable over the last fifteen years. According to data compiled by Colliers India, the country's price-to-income ratio has fallen sharply—from 88.5 in 2010 to 45.3 in 2025. This means that even though property prices have grown steadily, people's incomes have grown much faster.

The report says that average incomes have increased more than four times, rising about 10 percent each year. In contrast, housing prices have climbed at a slower rate of 5 to 7 percent annually. This widening gap has made it easier for families to purchase homes across major cities.

## 'Rapid AI adoption in India exposes gaps in governance'

**NEW DELHI**

India's companies are rapidly expanding their use of Artificial Intelligence, driven by global competition and fast improvements in generative AI. A new report by Alvarez & Marsal (A&M) reveals that AI is now being used in customer service, daily operations, and even critical business decisions across many sectors. However, the study warns that while growth is strong, proper oversight is falling behind.

According to the report, only 15 percent of organisations have adopted AI across their entire business. Most companies have created basic rules or acceptable-use guidelines, but deeper governance remains weak. Only 19 percent have completed detailed risk assessments, and 81 percent lack full visibility into how their AI systems are monitored or controlled.

A&M said many AI projects are still developed in separate teams, causing uneven standards and unclear accountability, especially when both in-house and external models are used. The firm stressed the need for integrated frameworks that ensure transparency, clear responsibilities, and strong oversight. Dhruv Phophalia, Managing Director at A&M, said India's AI potential is huge, but long-term success will depend on how well companies secure and govern their systems. Early investment in strong foundations, he said, will help organisations unlock the full economic value of AI.

The report also highlighted gaps in responsible AI practices.

## IMF praises India's growth but flags data methodology concerns

**NEW DELHI**

A recent assessment by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has praised India's strong economic performance, crediting steady macroeconomic policies and earlier reforms for supporting growth. The report says India's economy is expected to stay resilient even with global challenges, and inflation is likely to remain under control. However, the IMF has given a C grade to India's national accounts statistics, which include major figures such as GDP and GVA. Overall, India received a B grade across all data categories.

The IMF says its concern is linked to the methods used in India's statistical system, though it does not question the accuracy of the data itself. It notes differences between GDP numbers calculated from production and income compared to those calculated from expenditure. The IMF believes these gaps suggest parts of household consumption and the informal sector may not be fully captured. It also mentions limited use of seasonal adjustments, limited detail in quarterly data, and dependence on an "outdated" base year of 2011–12.

However, an article in Saviours magazine argues that the IMF has overlooked important facts. India's public finance and accounting systems are examined by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG), an independent constitutional authority. CAG reports are submitted to Parliament and state legislatures, where committees from all parties review them. Government borrowing is handled through the Reserve Bank of India under clear rule-based limits, and various budget documents and audit reports are cross-checked to ensure accuracy.

The article also notes that India's tax collections are tracked through advanced digital systems, and corporate accounts undergo strict audits. It stresses that India's informal economy is no longer a statistical blind spot, as increasing formalisation has linked it more closely with tax and banking networks.

## Manufacturing sector to drive 46% of India's industrial leasing by 2027

**NEW DELHI**

India's manufacturing sector is rapidly reshaping the country's industrial and logistics market, with a new report showing that manufacturing leasing is set to take a 46 per cent share of total industrial and warehousing space by 2027. A JLL study reveals that leasing activity in the top eight cities is expected to reach 33.7 million square feet by 2027, rising sharply from recent years and signalling the sector's growing strength.

According to the report, manufacturing leasing touched 22.1 million square feet in 2024, and overall demand for such spaces is likely to climb to 34 million square feet by 2027. This steady rise shows how strongly the manufacturing sector is shaping real estate decisions and long-term planning across major industries.

The report also highlights a major shift toward Grade A industrial spaces. Demand for these high-quality buildings increased from 70 per cent in 2019 to 82 per cent in 2024, and further rose to 87 per cent by the third quarter of 2025 in the top eight cities. These facilities are increasingly preferred because they support automation, meet advanced infrastructure needs, and offer better safety and sustainability features.

Industry expert Yogesh Shevade from JLL said the seven-fold jump in leasing between 2020 and 2024 clearly shows how manufacturers are now choosing leased land and modern buildings to match new production needs. Sectors such as electronics, auto components, engineering, and white goods are driving this shift, especially as companies demand stricter hygiene standards, greener buildings, and more advanced safety systems.

Among the major cities, Pune and Chennai lead manufacturing leasing activity, together accounting for 75 per cent of the total demand as of the third quarter of 2025. Other cities like Bengaluru, Mumbai, and Delhi-NCR are also seeing fast growth, further boosting the country's overall industrial leasing momentum.

## BSNL expands 4G network with future-ready plan

**NEW DELHI**

BSNL has installed 97,068 new 4G sites across India, with 93,511 already active as of October 31, the government informed Parliament. These sites use Indian-made technology and can be upgraded to 5G, supporting the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' push for self-reliance. The supply of 4G equipment began in September 2023 after BSNL placed a national-level purchase order.

Minister of State for Communications and Rural Development, Dr. Pemmasani Chandra Sekhar, said the company is also working on several government-backed projects, such as the 4G Saturation Scheme, Border Out Post upgrades, Left-Wing Extremism Phase-I improvements, and more. BSNL plans to convert all its 4G towers to 5G within the next eight months, ensuring faster and more reliable connectivity. To strengthen service quality, BSNL is replacing old batteries at tower sites and using diesel generators in areas with power issues or high revenue demand. Many new tower sites also use solar energy as the main power source under the Digital Bharat Nidhi programme. BSNL has shown steady financial growth in the first half of FY26, earning Rs 11,134 crore. The company met 93 per cent of its revenue goal for the second quarter by generating Rs 5,347 crore. For the full year, BSNL aims to reach Rs 27,500 crore in revenue, higher than last year's target of Rs 25,000 crore.

**SUMMIT INVITATION EXTENDED**

# *T'gana CM invites PM for 'Telangana Rising 2047'*

**HYDERABAD**

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on Wednesday to invite him to the upcoming Telangana Rising 2047 Global Summit. The summit will take place on December 8 and 9 at Bharat Future City in Hyderabad. Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka also joined the meeting, which was held on the Parliament premises.

The Chief Minister gave the Prime Minister a specially designed invitation printed by the state government. He explained that Telangana's long-term goal matches the Union Government's Viksit Bharat 2047 vision. Telangana aims to become a $3-trillion economy by 2047, and to support this goal, the government has created the Telangana Rising 2047 Vision Document. It studies growth needs for different sectors and outlines development plans for the coming decades. He added that the document was prepared with inputs from NITI Aayog and experts, and will be officially released during the summit.

Revanth Reddy asked the Prime Minister for full support for the state's development projects. He requested approval for Phase-II expansion of the Hyderabad Metro Rail, covering 162.5 km at a projected cost of ₹43,848 crore. The state wants the project to be taken up as a Joint Venture between the Centre and the State.

He also sought Cabinet approval and financial sanction for the northern section of the Hyderabad Regional Ring Road (RRR) and asked for permission to begin work on the southern section. The Chief Minister urged the Centre to take up the proposed Regional Ring Rail project as well.

Further, he requested special attention for major road corridors, including the 12-lane Greenfield Expressway from Hyderabad to Bandar Port via Amaravati and the Hyderabad–Bengaluru High-Speed Corridor. He also asked for approval to build a four-lane elevated road from Munnanur to Srisailam to improve travel to the famous pilgrimage centre.

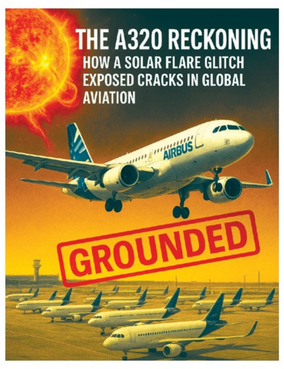
# THE A320 RECKONING:

## How a Solar Flare Glitch Exposed Cracks in Global Aviation

In the high-stakes world of commercial aviation, where split-second decisions mean the difference between routine takeoffs and catastrophic failures, few events can ripple across continents like a single line of faulty code.

On November 28, 2025, Europe's Airbus issued a sweeping directive that grounded thousands of its flagship A320-family jets worldwide—a precautionary recall affecting more than half the global fleet of these workhorse aircraft.

Triggered by a bizarre mid-air incident months earlier, the order mandated immediate software rollbacks and, in some cases, hardware swaps to shield flight controls from the sun's unpredictable fury. What began as a technical hiccup has snowballed into a multifaceted crisis, laying bare vulnerabilities in aircraft safety oversight, airline operations, and the intricate web of global supply chains. As fleets sit idle and passengers scramble, the fallout threatens holiday travel, airline bottom lines, and even the long-term faith in one of aviation's most ubiquitous machines. The spark ignited on October 30, 2025, aboard JetBlue Flight 1230, an A320 en route from Cancun, Mexico, to Newark, New Jersey. Cruising at 32,000 feet, the plane suddenly nosedived without pilot input, plummeting 1,500 feet in seconds and injuring 15 passengers—some hurled against overhead bins, others strapped in but battered by the chaos. The crew wrestled the jet back to stability and diverted to Tampa, Florida, for an emergency landing.




Initial investigations pointed to an anomaly in the Elevator Aileron Computer (ELAC), the digital brain translating pilot commands to the aircraft's elevators and ailerons for pitch and roll control. Deeper analysis revealed a chilling culprit: intense solar radiation, from a coronal mass ejection, had corrupted critical data in the ELAC's software during a routine system switchover.

This "uncommanded pitch-down event," as regulators termed it, exposed a flaw in the latest software version (L104), rendering it vulnerable to cosmic interference—a risk Airbus hadn't fully anticipated in its fly-by-wire pioneer, the A320, first flown in 1987. Airbus's response was swift and unprecedented. In a bulletin to over 350 operators, the company identified roughly 6,000 jets—out of 11,300 in service—needing fixes before their next flight.

For most (about two-thirds), the remedy was a simple rollback to a 2022 software iteration, taking 30 to 120 minutes per plane. But for around 900 older models, hardware replacement was required, potentially sidelining them for weeks amid global parts shortages.

The European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) formalized this with an Emergency Airworthiness Directive, echoed by counterparts like the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and India's Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). "Safety is paramount," EASA declared, acknowledging the "unfortunate disruption" but prioritizing prevention of structural overload or worse.

## Airlines Scramble for Alternatives as A320 Recall Grounds Fleets Worldwide

The directive landed like a thunderclap during peak travel season, catching airlines mid-stride. In the U.S., where Thanksgiving weekend saw 7 million flyers airborne, four of the top 10 A320 operators—American Airlines, Delta, JetBlue, and United—faced immediate peril.

American, the world's largest A320 fleet owner with 480 jets, initially pegged 340 for fixes but revised to 209 after clarification, completing most by Saturday with "all hands on deck." Delta, affecting fewer than 50 A321neos, wrapped updates overnight, minimizing chaos.

JetBlue, ground zero for the scare, canceled 70 flights Sunday and 20 more Monday, stranding thousands as it patched 120 of 150 impacted birds. United, with just six planes, reported "minor disruptions."

Across the Pacific, Asia bore the brunt, where A320s underpin short-haul networks. Japan's All Nippon Airways (ANA), the region's largest A320 operator, axed 95 domestic flights Saturday, impacting 13,200 passengers—rivals Japan Airlines, Boeing-heavy, sailed unscathed. Australia's Jetstar, Qantas's low-cost arm, grounded 34 of 85 A320s, scrapping 90 flights and leaving queues snaking through Sydney and Melbourne terminals. In Singapore, Scoot (a SIA subsidiary) fixed 21 of 29 jets by Saturday, while AirAsia aimed for 48-hour completion across its vast fleet.

India, home to one of the world's biggest A320 clusters (over 540 jets), felt the squeeze acutely. The DGCA, mirroring EASA, barred flights until compliance, affecting 338 planes: 200 IndiGo, 113 Air India, and 25 Air India Express. IndiGo, India's busiest carrier with 370 A320s, warned of "possible delays" but powered through, finishing all 200 by Sunday with zero cancellations—engineers toiling overnight at hubs like Delhi and Bengaluru. Air India, blending legacy and Vistara fleets, hit 90% completion (100 of 113) sans major hits, though four Air India Express flights fell.

"No major impact on schedule integrity," the airline insisted, but passengers on Delhi-Mumbai shuttles griped of hour-long tarmac waits for verifications.

## How the A320 Recall Could Upend Holiday Travel Across Continents

Timing amplified the torment: the recall hit as Northern Hemisphere holidays loomed, turning routine reunions into logistical nightmares. In the U.S., post-Thanksgiving "Sundays" typically jam 3 million passengers; this year, A320 woes shaved capacity, forcing rebooks and stranding families. A Chicago mother, ticketed on American's O'Hare-to-Orlando hop, waited 12 hours for a Delta reroute, her toddler's first Disney dream deferred. Globally, 6.2 million daily A320 passengers—147,000 in India alone—faced uncertainty, with IATA estimating 824 IndiGo flights at risk.

Europe dodged the worst; easyJet preemptively patched, operating normally Saturday. But Colombia's Avianca, 70% fleet-tied, halted bookings through December 8, crippling Bogotá's holiday exodus. In Australia, Jetstar's 90 cancellations marooned 20,000, hitting tourism hard—hotels in Cairns reported 15% no-shows. Asia's Diwali hangover lingered; ANA's cuts severed Tokyo-Osaka links, while IndiGo's tweaks rippled through Delhi-Dubai corridors.

Travelers vented fury online: #A320Grounded trended with tales of missed connections, from a London bridegroom's stag do in Barcelona to a Mumbai exec's Singapore pitch. Compensation varied—EU's EC 261 mandates €250-600 for delays over three hours, plus care (meals, hotels); U.S. DOT demands refunds but skimps on extras; India's CAR 135 offers similar but enforcement lags. "It's chaos, but safety first," sighed a stranded Delhi passenger, sipping airport chai.

- Global delays
- Massive cancellations
- Passenger stranding
- Capacity crunch
- Tourism impact
- Rebooking chaos
- Compensation disputes
- Online backlash
- Fleet adjustments
- Gradual recovery

## Maintenance Crisis: What the Airbus Recall Reveals About Aircraft Safety Oversight

Beneath the headlines lurks a deeper malaise: aviation's maintenance ecosystem, strained to breaking by post-pandemic booms and supply snarls. The A320 recall didn't just expose software sins; it spotlighted oversight gaps that let such flaws fester. Launched in 1984 as fly-by-wire's trailblazer, the A320 revolutionized safety with digital safeguards. Yet, as fleets ballooned—overtaking Boeing's 737 as history's most-delivered (12,000+ units)—vigilance waned. Airbus's admission of "limited real-time awareness" of software versions across 350 operators screams coordination voids. Regulators bear scrutiny too. EASA's directive, while prompt, relied on Airbus's self-report; the FAA's echo came hours later. In India, DGCA's ban was laudable but reactive—why no proactive solar-flare stress tests? Globally, maintenance backlogs plague: hundreds of A320s idle for Pratt & Whitney engine overhauls, per IATA. "We're firefighting with full hangars," quipped a Lufthansa technician, juggling A320 ELACs amid engine queues.

The JetBlue plunge, though non-fatal, echoes Boeing's 737 MAX saga—software hubris sidelining 387 jets for 20 months, costing $20 billion. Airbus, long the "safe" foil, now grapples similar shadows.

Experts decry over-reliance on iterative updates without holistic audits; solar interference, once niche (affecting high-altitude electronics), demands reevaluation amid solar maximum cycles peaking 2025. "This isn't isolated—it's a symptom," warns aviation analyst Richard Aboulafia.

# ECONOMIC SHOCKWAVE:

## Global Airlines Count the Cost of Airbus A320 Groundings

The ledger bleeds red. IATA tallies $500 million daily A320 revenue lost—$3 billion over a week, dwarfing Boeing MAX's $1 billion monthly hit. IndiGo, 60% A320-dependent, forfeited ₹200 crore in slots; Air India, post-Vistara merger, ₹150 crore. Globally, American's 209-jet idle cost $50 million; ANA's 95 cuts, ¥2 billion.

Ripple effects amplify: tourism tanks—$1.5 billion U.S. holiday shortfall; freight falters, delaying $100 million Asian exports. Suppliers scramble: Thales, ELAC-maker, faces $200 million retrofit bills; chip shortages, post-COVID hangovers, hike hardware costs 20%. Airbus stock dipped 3%, erasing €1 billion market cap; insurers brace for $500 million claims.

India's aviation, 8% GDP contributor, reels: 201,000 daily passengers disrupted, stalling ₹50,000 crore sector growth. Low-cost carriers like IndiGo, margins razor-thin (5%), absorb hits via wet-leases at 20% premiums. Long-term? Accelerated modernization—Boeing eyeing A320 refugees; startups pitching drone alternatives. The shockwave? A $10 billion global tab, per CAPA, underscoring aviation's fragility in interconnected skies.

### From Supply Chains to Spare Parts: Why the A320 Recall May Last Longer Than Expected

The fix's facade hides thorns: 900 hardware swaps amid chip droughts, per Jefferies—delays to Q2 2026. Airbus's aerostructure vendors (French/German panels) flagged quality snags, grounding "limited" new-builds. Engine woes compound: Pratt & Whitney's 350-jet annual groundings clash with ELAC rushes. Global MROs, 20% capacity-strapped, queue A320s; IndiGo's secondary leases cost 15% extra. "It's a perfect storm," says analyst Aboulafia. Airbus pledges ramp-ups, but tariffs and geopolitics loom. The recall? A supply chain siren, forecasting prolonged pain.

### Regulators Under Pressure: How Civil Aviation Bodies Are Responding to the A320 Crisis

EASA/FAA/DGCA triumphed in speed but face backlash: "Why no preemptive cosmic audits?" critics bay. DGCA's India ban averted disaster, but U.S. probes JetBlue's post-incident ops. Harmonization talks brew—global ELAC standards? Pressure mounts: parliamentary grillings, lawsuits. Regulators pivot to proactivity, eyeing AI oversight. The crisis? A forge for fortified skies.

### Could This Trigger a Fleet Modernization Race? Airlines Reassess Reliance on A320s

Silver lining? Catalyst. IndiGo eyes Boeing 737s; Delta accelerates A350s. Airbus pitches A321XLRs—20% greener. "Diversify or die," mandates Aboulafia. Investments surge: $200 billion modernization wave by 2030. The recall? Not end, but evolution—A320's swan song, birthing resilient heirs.

## Airports Brace for Chaos: Ground Operations under Strain after A320 Recall

Ground zero for the bedlam? Airports, where A320s clog 40% of slots. Delhi's T3, India's busiest, saw 200 IndiGo delays cascade into baggage pileups and gate scrambles. "It's like herding cats in a monsoon," a handler lamented, as repositioning flights—sans pax—gummed ramps.

Globally, Tampa's post-JetBlue triage swelled; Bogotá's El Dorado, Avianca's hub, teetered on blackout.

Infrastructure buckled: fuel trucks idled, de-icing crews stretched thin in Europe's chill. Narita's cargo bays, A320-reliant, delayed perishables—Japanese sashimi rotted in holds. Passenger terminals morphed into limbo lounges: Melbourne's throngs queued for refunds, while Frankfurt's lounges overflowed with rerouted elites. Staffing shortages, pandemic legacies, exacerbated woes; undertrained temps fumbled rebooks.

Yet pockets of poise emerged. Singapore Changi's AI triage smoothed queries; Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji deployed extra immigration lanes.

The crisis accelerated digital pivots—self-bag drops, app-based vouchers—hinting at resilient futures. Still, as queues dissipated, scars lingered: overtime fatigue, eroded trust. Airports, aviation's unsung arteries, proved their pulse—thready, but beating.

# SA Script Stunning 4-Wicket Win in 2nd ODI, Level Series against India

South Africa scripted a remarkable chase in Raipur to stun India and level series

**RAIPUR**

South Africa produced a sensational run chase to beat India by four wickets in the second ODI at New Raipur on Wednesday, successfully overhauling a steep 359-run target to level the three-match series 1-1. The result turns Saturday's third ODI into a high-stakes decider.

Invited to bat after losing their 20th consecutive toss, India recovered from an early jolt through a commanding top-order display. Virat Kohli (102), Ruturaj Gaikwad (105) and KL Rahul (66*) powered the hosts to 358/5, with Rahul accelerating brilliantly in the final overs.

Despite a shaky start and a slow powerplay, the Proteas rebuilt through skipper Aiden Markram's magnificent 110 off 98 balls, studded with 10 fours and 4 sixes. His steady stand with Temba Bavuma laid the platform before Harshit Rana removed him at the 30-over mark. But India failed to capitalise.

Dewald Brevis' explosive 54 tilted the chase firmly towards South Africa as Indian bowlers struggled for breakthroughs at crucial moments. Fielding lapses compounded the pressure, with Prasidh Krishna proving expensive despite eventually sending back Matthew Breetzke for 68.

Tony de Zorzi's retirement hurt briefly slowed momentum but the visitors regrouped quickly. After dismissing Marco Jansen early, India hoped for late breakthroughs, but Corbin Bosch (unbeaten) ensured the chase remained on course. He sealed the match alongside Keshav Maharaj in the 49th over, completing one of South Africa's finest away chases.

The resounding win means both teams head into the series finale with everything to play for.

**FINAL SCORE**

- **India:** 358/5 (50 overs)
- **South Africa:** 360/6 (49.2 overs)
- **Result**: SA won by 4 wickets
- Series: 1–1

**TOP PERFORMERS**

**India**

- Ruturaj Gaikwad — 105
- Virat Kohli — 102
- KL Rahul — 66*

**South Africa**

- Aiden Markram — 110
- Matthew Breetzke — 68
- Dewald Brevis — 54

**KEY MOMENTS**

- Kohli & Gaikwad hit twin tons
- Markram–Brevis counter-attack breaks India's grip
- Fielding lapses hurt India
- Bosch–Maharaj finish calmly under pressure

# Haaland Fastest Player to 100 Premier League Goals

**Erling Haaland hits milestone in just 111 games as Manchester City edge Fulham 5–4**

**LONDON**

Erling Haaland etched his name deeper into Premier League history, becoming the fastest player to reach 100 goals in the competition as Manchester City clinched a chaotic 5–4 win over Fulham at Craven Cottage.

The 25-year-old Norwegian reached the landmark in just 111 matches, eclipsing Alan Shearer's previous record of 124 games. Haaland struck in the 17th minute, drilling a first-time left-footed shot from a Jeremy Doku cross — a finish typical of his ruthless precision.

Shearer still holds the overall Premier League record of 260 goals, but Haaland's extraordinary rate has already sparked conversations about whether he could one day surpass the Newcastle United legend.

City manager Pep Guardiola was full of admiration for his star striker. "If you told me when he arrived that he'd score 100 goals in 111 games, I'd say, 'Are you sure?' The numbers are insane," he said. "He was outstanding today. Hopefully he stays hungry and keeps scoring for this club."

Haaland, whose father Alf-Inge Haaland watched proudly from the stands, said the achievement meant a great deal. "Proud moment — the 100 club is a huge thing," he said. "To do it this quickly is amazing. I'm proud, I'm happy. A striker for City should score a lot of goals — that's my job. I should have had a hat-trick today."

Having been stuck on 99 for two matches after misses against Newcastle United and Leeds United, Haaland showed no hesitation this time. His tally of 15 league goals this season keeps him atop the scoring charts as City continue their pursuit of multiple trophies.

With his physical dominance, clinical finishing and relentless mentality, Haaland's century feels less like a destination and more like the beginning of an even larger legacy.

*Promoters evaluate Rajiv Gandhi Stadium, plan festivities for Lionel Messi's Hyderabad visit*

# Messi's GOAT Tour Promoters Inspect Hyd Venue Ahead of Event

**HYDERABAD**

With Lionel Messi scheduled to visit Hyderabad on December 13, the promoters of the GOAT Tour conducted a detailed inspection of the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium, the proposed venue for the GOAT Cup. The delegation included Parvathi Reddy, chief patron and advisor, Satadru Dutta, chief promoter of The GOAT Tour India, along with Messi's international tour adviser Christopher Flannery and personal manager Pablo Negre. Dr. Rohin Reddy, a member of the coordination committee, also attended.

The group surveyed the stadium, focusing on entry and exit points, crowd management, and overall security arrangements. The inspection coincided with a Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy match between Baroda and Punjab, which drew over 10,000 fans, allowing the promoters to gauge the atmosphere and logistics.

Dr. Rohin highlighted that the team also discussed the event schedule, security measures, and programme details. Messi is set to kick off an exhibition football match alongside Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, and conduct a football clinic for budding youngsters, providing them a rare opportunity to train with the global superstar.

In addition to sporting activities, the event will feature cultural programmes and appearances from stars of the film industry, creating a festive atmosphere for attendees. The celebrations are expected to conclude by 9 p.m., after which Messi will depart for Mumbai to continue the third leg of his tour.

The inspection reflects meticulous planning by the GOAT Tour team, ensuring smooth execution and a memorable experience for fans in Hyderabad while maintaining high standards of safety and logistics for the global football icon.

# Serena Williams Shuts Down Comeback Rumours, Says Not Returning to Tennis

**LOS ANGELES**

Serena Williams firmly dismissed speculation about a potential tennis comeback, stating on social media that she is "NOT coming back," despite reports that she had reentered the International Registered Testing Pool overseen by the International Tennis Integrity Agency (ITIA). The 23-time Grand Slam champion's name appearing in the pool is typically the first formal step for any retired player seeking a return to competition.

The 44-year-old last played professionally at the 2022 U.S. Open, where she bid an emotional farewell but declined to use the word "retirement," saying she was "evolving" away from the sport. Her recent registration sparked widespread buzz, prompting the tennis star to clarify matters online: "Omg yall I'm NOT coming back. This wildfire is crazy."

Her agent did not immediately comment, but the U.S. Tennis Association acknowledged the development. Spokesman Brendan McIntyre noted that Serena had "filed the necessary paperwork" and added that the organisation would "enthusiastically welcome" her if she decided to compete again.

The ITIA confirmed her inclusion in the pool, explaining that returning athletes must provide detailed whereabouts and remain available for testing for six months before reentering official competition. This requirement applies to anyone returning after retirement.

Serena remains one of the sport's most influential figures, her presence still commanding attention worldwide. A comeback would be a landmark storyline, especially following the recent return of her sister Venus, who resumed competition in July at age 45 after an 18-month break.

# K. Mahesh Wins First Place in National Shooting Competition

**BENGALURU**

In the 2nd National Shooting Competition organized by the Karnataka State Rimfire and Benchrest Shooting Federation, K. Mahesh of Hosakote Town secured first place by scoring 245 points out of 250 in the 45-year age group. MLA Sharath Bachegowda presented the award certificate to the winners. Prizes were distributed. Planning Authority Chairman N Kesavamurthy congratulated Mahesh for his excellent performance. Karnataka State Rimfire and Benchrest Shooting Federation Treasurer H.R. Mahesh Babu, Directors Dr. John Paul and Puneeth Kumar were present.

# Karnataka's Naveen Appu Scripts History with Double Asian and World Titles

**PATTAYA (THAILAND)**

Karnataka's bodybuilding star Naveen Appu has etched his name in the sport's history books by clinching both the Asian Championship and the World Championship titles at the 2025 Mr & Mrs World Pro and Asian Championship held in Pattaya, Thailand. The event, organised by the United World Sports and Fitness Federation (UWSFF), saw Naveen emerge as the first Kannadiga to achieve this extraordinary double triumph, bringing immense pride to the state and the country.

Competing in the fiercely contested 90+ kg bodybuilding category, Naveen outshone competitors from 11 countries, proving his strength, discipline and consistency on the international stage. Representing India through the United Karnataka Bodybuilders and Fitness Association (UKBFA), he delivered back-to-back stellar performances at the Asian Championship on November 28 and the World Championship on November 29.

First Kannadiga wins dual UWSFF Asian and World bodybuilding titles in Thailand

The event witnessed participation from over 600 athletes, with nearly 20 nations vying for top honours at the World Championship and 7–8 countries competing in the Asian segment. Naveen not only dominated bodybuilding but also secured first place in weightlifting and arm wrestling, further showcasing his all-round prowess.

With a competitive career spanning over 25 championships, Naveen has consistently proven his mettle. His illustrious achievements include four Mr India titles, seven Mr Karnataka wins, three Mr South India titles, and the Mr Bengaluru crown in 2018. He has also been a notable presence at the Mysuru Dasara bodybuilding showcase, cementing his place as one of Karnataka's finest athletes.

Naveen was accompanied by his family, Bannerghatta social worker Anil Nirani, and close friends, who witnessed his remarkable journey culminating in this historic international victory.

# Bara Rally Past Atletico Madrid 3–1 to Extend La Liga Lead

**BARCELONA**

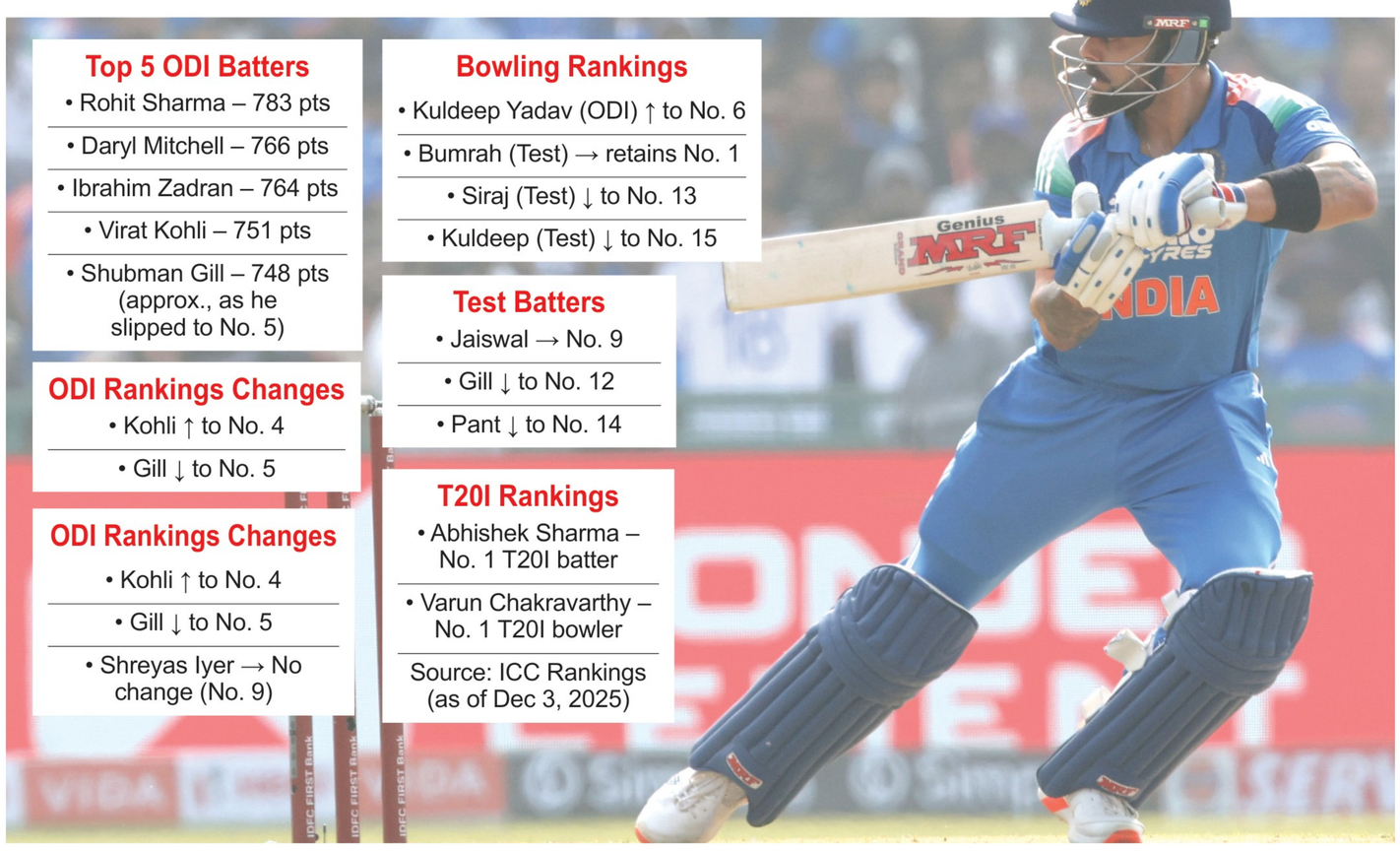
Barcelona staged a spirited comeback to defeat Atletico Madrid 3–1 at the Camp Nou, extending their advantage at the top of La Liga to four points. Despite falling behind early, the champions responded with authority as Raphinha, Dani Olmo and Ferran Torres found the net to end Atletico's 13-match unbeaten league run.

Alex Baena opened the scoring for Atletico after breaking behind Barcelona's high defensive line, with VAR confirming his effort. But Barca equalised swiftly in the 26th minute when Pedri threaded a pass to Raphinha, who rounded Jan Oblak to slot home. The hosts had a golden chance to take the lead before half-time, only for Robert Lewandowski to balloon a penalty over the bar after Dani Olmo was fouled.

Real Madrid, currently second, face Athletic Bilbao on Wednesday as they aim to close the gap. Atletico, meanwhile, remain fourth, six points behind Barcelona.

Following recent inconsistencies — including a 3-0 Champions League loss to Chelsea — Barcelona's display against a title rival offered coach Hansi Flick a timely morale boost. "This is the spirit we need to turn around games like this," Raphinha said. Barca, missing Ronald Araujo, Frenkie de Jong and several long-term absentees, continued their momentum in the second half. Olmo put them ahead with a composed finish, though he was forced off moments later with a shoulder injury. Pedri also departed after appearing to pick up a knock, prompting concern ahead of next week's Champions League clash with Frankfurt.

Atletico pushed for an equaliser, with Thiago Almada and Antoine Griezmann both missing key opportunities. In stoppage time, substitute Marcus Rashford was denied by Oblak before Alejandro Balde squared for Ferran Torres to seal the win.



**Top 5 ODI Batters**
- Rohit Sharma – 783 pts
- Daryl Mitchell – 766 pts
- Ibrahim Zadran – 764 pts
- Virat Kohli – 751 pts
- Shubman Gill – 748 pts (approx., as he slipped to No. 5)

**ODI Rankings Changes**
- Kohli ↑ to No. 4
- Gill ↓ to No. 5

**ODI Rankings Changes**
- Kohli ↑ to No. 4
- Gill ↓ to No. 5
- Shreyas Iyer → No change (No. 9)

**Bowling Rankings**
- Kuldeep Yadav (ODI) ↑ to No. 6
- Bumrah (Test) → retains No. 1
- Siraj (Test) ↓ to No. 13
- Kuldeep (Test) ↓ to No. 15

**Test Batters**
- Jaiswal → No. 9
- Gill ↓ to No. 12
- Pant ↓ to No. 14

**T20I Rankings**
- Abhishek Sharma – No. 1 T20I batter
- Varun Chakravarthy – No. 1 T20I bowler

Source: ICC Rankings (as of Dec 3, 2025)

# Kohli No. 4 in ODI Rankings after Ranchi Masterclass

## Kohli's 135-run knock against South Africa lifts him to fourth in ICC rankings

**DUBAI**

Virat Kohli jumped one spot to No. 4 in the latest ICC ODI rankings released on Wednesday, riding on his match-winning century in the opening ODI against South Africa in Ranchi.

The 37-year-old, who struck a 120-ball 135 in India's 17-run win, now sits at 751 rating points. He trails ODI No. 1 Rohit Sharma (783), New Zealand's Daryl Mitchell (766) and Afghanistan's Ibrahim Zadran (764).

Kohli's rise pushed India's ODI captain Shubman Gill down to No. 5, with the young opener missing the ongoing three-match series due to a neck injury. Shreyas Iyer, still recovering from a knock picked up during India's white-ball tour of Australia, remained steady at No. 9.

Left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav also gained from his performance in Ranchi, moving up one place to sixth after claiming four wickets.

In the Test rankings, India opener Yashasvi Jaiswal held firm at No. 9, while Gill slipped to No. 12. Wicket-keeper-batter Rishabh Pant dropped two spots to 14.

Among Test bowlers, Jasprit Bumrah continued to dominate the charts with 879 points, comfortably ahead of New Zealand's Matt Henry (846). Meanwhile, Mohammed Siraj and Kuldeep faced slight setbacks, falling to 13th and 15th after modest outings in the recent two-Test series against South Africa.

In T20Is, Indian players continued their stronghold, with Abhishek Sharma and Varun Chakravarthy retaining top positions in the batting and bowling lists respectively.

# Kohli Set to Play Vijay Hazare Match in B'luru on Dec 24

**BENGALURU**

**Virat Kohli will feature for Delhi in a key Vijay Hazare Trophy fixture**

Cricket fans in Bengaluru are in for a rare treat as Virat Kohli is set to play a domestic one-day match in the city after several years. The star batter has confirmed his availability for Delhi's Elite Group D clash against Andhra in the Vijay Hazare Trophy on December 24, to be held at the Alur Cricket Stadium on the outskirts of Bengaluru.

Kohli, 37, recently showcased his sublime form by scoring his 52nd ODI century against South Africa in the series opener at Ranchi. Despite limiting himself to just one international format, his sharpness at the crease has remained unquestionable. "He has confirmed his availability to play in the Vijay Hazare Trophy. How many games he will feature in is not clear yet, but his presence will be a massive boost to the Delhi dressing room," Delhi and District Cricket Association (DDCA) chief Rohan Jaitley said.

Delhi share their group with Gujarat, Saurashtra, Odisha, Services, Railways and Haryana. While Karnataka will be playing Kerala in Ahmedabad on the same day, the spotlight is firmly on Kohli's appearance in Alur. The league phase is scheduled to be held entirely in Alur, while the knockout matches—including the final—will take place at the BCCI Centre of Excellence Ground.

However, Kohli will not be available for the knockout stage should Delhi qualify, as he is set to participate in India's three-match ODI series against New Zealand from January 11 to 18, 2026.

Kohli's presence is expected to draw large crowds, as seen earlier this year when more than 12,000 spectators turned up for a Ranji Trophy match he featured in—an extraordinary turnout for a domestic fixture. Although he used that outing as preparation for international commitments, he later surprised many by announcing his retirement from Test cricket ahead of the England tour.

BCCI regulations require contracted players to participate in domestic tournaments unless injured or on national duty, making Kohli's participation both significant and timely.

# Shubman Declared Fit, Returns as Vice-Captain for SA T20 Series

**MUMBAI**

Star India batter Shubman Gill has been declared fit and will feature in the upcoming T20 International series against South Africa, returning as vice-captain after recovering from a neck injury that sidelined him from the ongoing ODI leg of the tour. A senior Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) official confirmed Gill's availability on Wednesday, offering a major boost to India's top order ahead of the five-match series.

Gill, 26, had sustained the injury during the opening Test against the Proteas in Kolkata, forcing him to miss the second Test in Guwahati as well as the subsequent ODI series. His absence had prompted temporary leadership discussions for the limited-overs leg, but clarity has now emerged with his full recovery. "Gill has recovered fully and will be back as vice-captain," the BCCI source said.

The stylish opener, who also leads India in Tests and ODIs, is expected to slot back into the T20 setup under regular skipper Suryakumar Yadav. India will announce the complete squad for the series in the coming days.

The T20 series begins on December 9 in Cuttack, followed by fixtures on December 11 in Chandigarh, December 14 in Dharamsala, December 17 in Lucknow, and the final match on December 19 in Ahmedabad. The return of Gill, known for his fluent strokeplay and consistency, is likely to strengthen India's batting depth as the team looks to fine-tune its combinations ahead of next year's major tournaments.

Shubman Gill has recovered from his neck injury and will rejoin India's T20 squad

India sealed their FIH Junior World Cup quarterfinal berth with a commanding victory

# India Storm into Quarterfinals with Dominant 5–0 Win Over Switzerland

**MADURAI**

India secured their place in the quarterfinals of the FIH Men's Junior Hockey World Cup with an emphatic 5–0 win over Switzerland in their final Pool B encounter at the Madurai International Hockey Stadium. The world No. 2 side delivered a clinical performance, powered by braces from Manmeet Singh and Sharda Nand Tiwari, to finish the group stage unbeaten.

Manmeet, celebrating his birthday, opened the scoring early after converting a sharp assist from Dilraj Singh. Though Switzerland's goalkeeper Timo Graf saved India's first penalty corner, Manmeet doubled the lead moments later, deflecting Talem Priyobarta's free hit into the net. India maintained pressure, and drag-flicker Sharda Nand Tiwari made it 3–0 by converting a penalty corner at the end of the first quarter.

Arshdeep Singh added India's fourth just before halftime, scoring with a crisp backhand after Graf denied Manmeet a chance to complete his hat-trick. The third quarter saw Switzerland nearly pull one back through a penalty stroke, but Indian goalkeeper Prince Deep Singh executed a brilliant rightward dive to keep the clean sheet intact.

In the final quarter, Sharda Nand Tiwari struck again from another penalty corner, extending India's lead to 5–0. A late attempt by Arshdeep was disallowed after video referral confirmed a foul by Dilraj Singh, but the hosts' dominance remained unquestioned.

Despite the heavy loss, Swiss keeper Timo Graf stood out with several exceptional saves. India, however, will look to improve their penalty corner conversion rate, scoring just two of their eight attempts—both courtesy of Tiwari, who has effectively filled the void left by injured drag-flicker Araijeet Singh Hundal.

Earlier in Chennai, Chile defeated Oman 2–0 in the other Pool B fixture. India topped the group with nine points and will now return to Chennai for their quarterfinal on Friday.

Here is a clean, newsroom-style infographics section you can add at the end of the story. You can simply place it below the article or beside it depending on layout.

**FIH MEN'S JUNIOR HOCKEY WORLD CUP — INDIA vs SWITZERLAND**

**Final Score**
India 5 — 0 Switzerland

**Goal Scorers (India)**
- Manmeet Singh — 2nd min, 11th min
- Sharda Nand Tiwari — 13th min, 54th min
- Arshdeep Singh — 28th min

**India's Penalty Corners**
- Earned: 8
- Converted: 2
- Conversion success: 25%

**Switzerland's Key Performer**
- Timo Graf (GK) — 7+ crucial saves

**MATCH HIGHLIGHTS SNAPSHOT**
- India finish Pool B as unbeaten table-toppers.
- Manmeet Singh celebrates birthday with a brace.
- Tiwari's drag-flicks continue to impress.
- Switzerland denied multiple goals thanks to Graf's heroic saves.
- India maintain clean sheet with strong goalkeeping by Prince Deep Singh.

**POOL B STANDINGS**

| Team | Played | Won | Lost | Points |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| India | 3 | 3 | 0 | 9 |
| Switzerland | 3 | 2 | 1 | 6 |
| Chile | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Oman | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 |

# Former England Batter Robin Smith Dies at 62

**LONDON**

Former England batter Robin Smith, celebrated as one of his era's bravest and most technically accomplished players, passed away at his home in Perth, Australia, aged 62. Smith played 62 Tests between 1988 and 1996, scoring 4,236 runs at an excellent average of 43.67 with nine centuries. His legacy, however, rests on more than numbers.

Revered for his fearless batting against hostile pace, Smith flourished during a period dominated by formidable West Indies fast bowlers such as Curtly Ambrose, Courtney Walsh, Malcolm Marshall and Patrick Patterson. His trademark square cut became symbolic of his defiance, helping England secure consecutive 2–2 Test series draws against the West Indies in the early 1990s.

ECB Chair Richard Thompson hailed him as a player who met world-class fast bowling "with a defiant smile," recalling Smith's iconic unbeaten 167 against Australia at Edgbaston in 1993. Born in Durban in 1963, Smith moved to England under the guidance of Barry Richards and Mike Procter. Though later troubled by struggles against spin and personal battles with alcoholism, he remained admired for his grit, style and courage.

# Teams Must Not 'Pigeonhole' Test Cricket, Says Jonathan Trott

**DUBAI**

Former England batter and Afghanistan head coach Jonathan Trott has urged the cricketing fraternity not to "pigeonhole" Test cricket into a single style, emphasising that the format's beauty lies in its diversity. Speaking during a media interaction at the ILT20, Trott said there was nothing wrong with India continuing to rely on spin-friendly surfaces that reflect their strengths and conditions.

India had opted for a dry, "underprepared" pitch in the opening Test in Kolkata—a move that backfired as South Africa dominated and eventually swept the two-match series, their first Test series win in India in 25 years. But Trott argued that such conditions are part of cricket's global character. "When you go to India or Sri Lanka, it's going to spin. Australia will always be pacey and bouncy. That's what makes cricket great," he said. "You don't want to suddenly have a roll. As a player and coach, adapting to those differences is the biggest challenge."

Trott also cautioned against nostalgia-driven criticism of modern cricket, referencing India's 2-2 draw in England last summer. "You saw contrasting styles—Shubman Gill leading from the front, and Ben Stokes using Bazball. There was a time when we said cricket was boring with too many draws; now we say matches end too quickly. We must avoid thinking the grass is always greener."

The former England No. 3 defended Bazball as a valid, aggressive route to winning. "Brendon and Stokes will back their style in Australia. They've lost games before and still won series. I wouldn't bet against England," he added. On four-day Tests, Trott was categorical: "No." A member of the ICC Men's Cricket Committee, Trott also called for structured global windows for international and franchise cricket to avoid calendar chaos.

# Ex-India Captain Mamatha Maben Takes Charge as HK Women's Head Coach

**BENGALURU**

Former India women's cricket team captain Mamatha Maben has been appointed head coach of the Hong Kong women's side on a three-year contract, marking another significant chapter in her coaching journey that has previously taken her to Bangladesh and China. The move comes even as Hong Kong, China are in the midst of a four-match T20I series in Malaysia that began on November 30.

Maben, 55, said she applied for the role after an acquaintance pointed her to an advertisement by Cricket Hong Kong, China. "I had to go through a couple of interview rounds before I got the job," she said, expressing optimism about the project despite the inherent challenges faced by associate nations.

With limited resources, facilities and player availability posing consistent hurdles, Maben remains determined to elevate the team's competitiveness. "My target is to take them at least five ranking points up over the next couple of years. I want to work extensively to enhance their skill sets. While there are many challenges working with an associate nation, I'm confident we can show growth," she said.

Her tenure will also involve long-term planning, with particular focus on the Asian Games in Japan next year and the expanded 16-team ICC Women's T20 World Cup in 2030. Maben added that she is eager for a "productive and exciting time" with Cricket Hong Kong, China.

A veteran of India's women's setup, Maben played 40 ODIs and four Tests between 1993 and 2004, making her debut at the 1993 World Cup. Her transition from player to international coach continues to underscore her influence on the global development of women's cricket.

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